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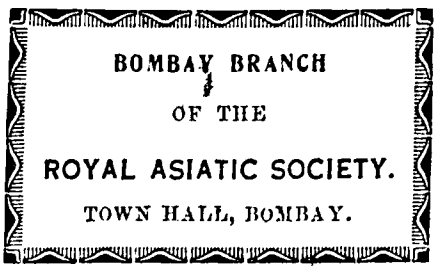

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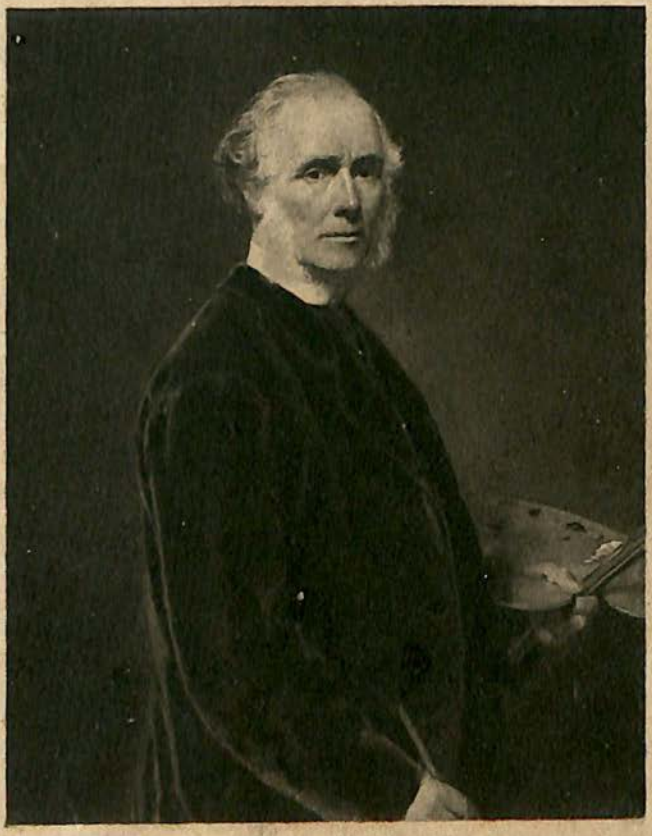

W. P. Frith

PAINTED BY HIMSELF IN 1883

London. Richard Bentley & Son. 1887

MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY

AND REMINISCENCES.

BY

W. P. FRITH, R.A.,

CHEVALIER OF THE LEGION OF HONOUR AND OF THE ORDER OF LEOPOLD; MEMBER OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF BELGIUM, AND OF THE ACADEMIES OF STOCKHOLM, VIENNA, AND ANTWERP.

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"The pencil speaks the tongue of every land."

DRYDEN.

Second Edition.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

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1887.

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MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY

AND

REMINISCENCES.

CHAPTER I.

"THE SALON D'OR."

In the Exhibition of 1868 I was represented by five pictures, namely, the scene from Goldsmith's "She Stoops to Conquer," the "Johnson and Garrick" subject, and three minor works, one of which represented Sterne's "Maria," so pathetically described in the pages of that writer, sitting, with wandering mind, "a look of wistful disorder," her flageolet in her hand, and her goat by her side. Never shall I forget that goat! It was fortunate that I got a strong man to hold it; fortunate, also, that my picture was not destroyed, and myself injured. For the animal violently objected to being painted: it knocked the man over, and butted him as he lay upon the floor; then turned its attention to me, and endeavoured to treat me in the same way. I received its first charge on my mahl-stick, which

snapped in my defence. My assistant recaptured the brute just as my easel, fortunately a very strong one, was made the means of experiment to try whether the goat's head or the mahogany was the harder; and again he—or *she*, I think it was (females are generally vicious—*female goats*, I mean)—was seized by the horns, and her head bent towards the floor. And now began a series of struggles in which man and goat were mixed together, like the Old Guard and our soldiers at Waterloo. For one moment the man had the best of it, and the goat was quiet; then, watching its opportunity, a violent plunge was made, and the man seemed to fly towards the ceiling, then down on his back again, and the butting recommenced.

It was now necessary to get more assistance, and I sent for one of my sons, a sturdy lad, who delighted in the business. After that we got on better, and I succeeded in painting an animal which, strange to say, is not unlike a goat.

The picture of Sterne's "Maria" is now in the possession of one of the brothers Burnand. The two Burnands are specimens of the very best kind of picture-collectors; men of great taste and judgment—though they certainly admired and sometimes bought my pictures: "Nemo mortalium omnibus horis sapit" ('tis long since I showed my classical knowledge); men who collected works of art from love of them, and of exceptional liberality, and without a thought of the mercantile element which so often guides the picture-buyer. Both these gentlemen possessed, and,

I am happy to say, still possess, admirable specimens of many of our best artists.

The model for "Maria" was a pretty, gentle creature, who had a history. She sat to me many times for many pictures; and it was her sad expression as much as her beauty that suggested "Maria" to me, and induced me to try the subject. I drew from her—reluctantly on her side—something of her history. Her superiority to an ordinary model was apparent in many ways; her manner and address were ladylike, and her grammar never caused a shudder. I knew of her mother as being "one who had seen better days," but was not aware that my model possessed a husband, until one day when, seeing palpable evidence of recent tears, and, among other distressing symptoms, something very like the mark of a recent blow, she told me she had been married for some time, and to a wretch who treated her with brutality. The man sought her acquaintance (he was a journeyman something or other, with a tolerable education), and, finding she was a Sunday-school teacher, he professed an ardent desire to join in the good work. She reluctantly consented to his seeing her home, and making the acquaintance of her mother, who very soon saw through the man, and cautioned her daughter against him. But the fellow was clever enough to find out the girl's weaknesses and pander to them. He was very assiduous at the Sunday-school, affected a veneration for religion and its observances, praised her beauty and helped her to adorn it—in short, won her heart and her consent to

marry him. This last fatal step, in spite of her mother's entreaties, she persisted in taking, and within a month afterwards the hypocrite dropped his mask, ridiculed the religion in which she sincerely believed, deserted her for others, came home occasionally mad-drunk, beat her, and would soon have killed her if she had not taken advice and left him. She hid herself successfully for some time, when, on coming to me one day to sit, I saw, before she spoke, that her retreat had been discovered. The man demanded money, and got it, but left her otherwise undisturbed. He informed her, with coarse language, that she needn't fear his wanting to live with her again, he had had enough of her and her tempers; but so long as she earned money—he didn't care how—he intended to have a share of it.

Soon after this my lovely "Maria" disappeared more effectually from my knowledge than she had done from her husband's. I regretted her loss, and made many unavailing inquiries after her—all in vain. I never saw her again but once, and then she was lounging in a splendid carriage, with some children, which, from the hasty glance I had of them, seemed greatly to resemble herself; but whether her husband is dead and she is married again, or whether she is not married again and her husband is not dead, this deponent knoweth not; but he heartily wishes her well wherever or whatever she may be—only reminding her that she has been rather late in coming to keep an appointment to enable him to finish a head begun nearly twenty years ago.

This dilatoriness reminds me of a story told of a sailor who took the opportunity of deserting from his ship on the occasion of his being sent ashore at some island to fetch some fruit for his captain. Fifteen years afterwards the sailor was looking into a print-shop in London, and, turning away to resume his walk, he found himself face to face with his deserted captain. After a look of mutual recognition and astonishment, mixed, on the sailor's part, with a considerable portion of alarm, the captain merely remarked, "You have been a long time getting that fruit!"

My first sight of Boswell and his friends on the Academy walls shocked me as usual. My diary says:

"To the R.A. Pictures well placed, and looking well—all but Johnson, which is hung too low, and looks dingy."

Dingy though it seemed to me, it was much approved, to my surprise; and, to this moment, I cannot account for its success, nor for the ridiculous price that was afterwards paid for it.

I suppose few people in public positions escape the cowardly pest of anonymous letters. Dickens told me that he received so many as to produce a habit of never reading any letter till he first ascertained if there was a name at the bottom of it. If the missive was unsigned, into the fire it went. I never was favoured in that way but once—when the "Boswell" picture was exhibited. I think the epistle emanated from a disappointed artist, for there was an ass's head on it very well drawn, and between the donkey's ears were my initials, "W. P. F."

"That's what you are," said the author; "and the sooner you go to school again, and learn to draw, the better it will be for the Exhibition, as you will not disgrace it as you do now."

It was my habit in those days to read the "art criticisms" in the papers, and, as the unfavourable ones were always sent to me, I had a good deal of reading. In one journal (the *Saturday Review*, I think) one of my larger pictures was severely handled. The paper was sent to me with the most scathing remarks underlined in lead pencil; with pencilled remarks in the margin calling my attention to the critic's observations in such phrases as:

"There you've got it!" "How do you like that?" "That's a nasty one, ain't it?" and so on.

I dare say many such playful attacks have been made upon me since. If so, I hereby advertise the performers that they may save themselves trouble; for, as I have said before, I never read a word of art criticism, either about myself or others.

My next venture was in the field of "modern life." I do not remember the subject of it with satisfaction, or write about it with pleasure; though I and my friends thought well of it at the time of its conception. My idea was to represent two scenes (a double picture). In the first, a young gentleman is asking an elderly one for his consent to a marriage with his daughter. In the second, the young lady is waiting —sympathetically supported by her mother—in great trepidation for the result of the interview. The pictures were placed in one frame, and called "Hope"

and "Fear." I cannot say they were successful—the subject was considered to belong to the "namby-pamby" school—with considerable justice, I fear. They found a purchaser, however, in a Mr. X——, who was a great lover of art, without being much acquainted with its mysteries. He was a very hospitable, pleasant gentleman, with a charming country-house—to which I paid several visits. Mr. X—— had a habit of thinking aloud, which (like a similar propensity in Lord Dudley and Ward) was often the cause of amusement and embarrassment to his friends and himself.

On one of my visits from Saturday to Monday, I went to church with my host. X——'s house was some mile and a half from his place of worship, and he drove me there in a double-bodied kind of phaeton —the front seat made to hold two persons, with a smaller seat behind for a servant. We had reached within half a mile of the church, when a lady was seen walking along the road.

"Confound it!" said X—— (to *himself*, as he imagined), "that's Mrs. Smith. It will never do to pass her. The man must drive her to church—confound her!" Then to me: "You see that lady walking along there? She is a particular friend of ours, and evidently going to church. I think we must offer her the carriage. Would you mind walking the rest of the way?"

"On the contrary," said I, "I should like it."

Almost as I spoke the carriage stopped by the lady's side. The usual "She would, and she would

not," took place, ending in Mrs. Smith seating herself by the groom's side, and being carefully wrapped up by Mr. X—— in a fur rug. As X—— was tenderly covering up the lady's knees, he said:

"Shan't take her back, though. She is as well able to walk as we are."

Fortunately Mrs. Smith was well acquainted with X——'s infirmity. She smiled an acknowledgment of his politeness; and she certainly walked home.

On another occasion, a large and distinguished company was assembled in X——'s drawing-room, after one of the sumptuous dinners for which he was celebrated. The walls were covered with pictures, the merits of which were freely discussed by the guests. I saw X——, with one of his guests, discussing the qualities of a picture, as was evident by frequent pointing on the part of the connoisseur to portions of the work.

The guest had to catch a train; and he had no sooner left the room, than, in the midst of a momentary stillness, X—— exclaimed in a loud voice, "I don't care a d—— what he thinks!" Then, to me, "Frith, do you think there is a want of breadth throughout this picture? My friend So-and-so says it is dreadfully 'cut up.'"

I may here relate another instance of thinking aloud that was told me by Vice-Chancellor Wigram:

Sir James Wigram was a guest at one of the State balls given in the days of William IV., and during the evening he found himself close to Queen Adelaide, who was in conversation with Lord Dudley

and Ward. The Queen had evidently been pestered with questions, and was in an irritable state—a condition, I believe, not uncommon with her. Just as Wigram reached the pair, Lord Dudley asked a question. "I have answered that question twice already," said the Queen.

"D—— her!—so she has!" *thought* Lord Dudley, and *said* it aloud.

As the pictures of "Hope" and "Fear" progressed, I was beset with doubts of their success. My diary says, on the 29th of July: "Upper part of mother's dress worked miserably; doubtful of these subjects; they are weak, I fear." I think the pictures were sold separately eventually—a sure sign of failure; for if a story is well told, and of sufficient interest in a series of pictures—as in Hogarth, for instance—no one would dream of selling them separately.

About this time an Exhibition took place at York. A copy, on a small scale, of the Great Exhibition of 1851; pictures, chiefly old masters, playing a prominent part in it. And never was the ignorance of the public in general, and of the owners of the pictures in particular, more ludicrously displayed.

A London doctor had formed a large collection of daubs, to which he had attached great names, in happy ignorance of the special qualities for which the painters were distinguished. So he had a crucifixion, by Ostade; a comic scene of characters dressed in the costume of the time of George I., by Rubens, and so on. And what was stranger, was the fact

that the Exhibition authorities had agreed in the estimate of the enormous value of these gems, as appraised by their owner, to the extent of paying large sums in the way of insurance. Query—would an insurance office be compelled to pay for the destruction by fire (a fate richly deserved) of a George III. Rubens, if evidence were forthcoming to prove the absurdity of its affiliation?

Never was a more assiduous student during the whole of his life than William Etty, R.A. Never, so long as his health lasted, did he miss a single night at the Life School, where his studies from the nude were the wonder and admiration of his fellow-students, young and old. Well do I remember the last he made at Somerset House. It was done from a stalwart life-guardsman, and on a pedestal partly supporting the figure was written: "Dulce dulce domum vale!"

The Academy migrated to Trafalgar Square in 1837; and there Etty resumed the work that—as I heard him say—made his life "a long summer's holiday." The journey upstairs to the pepper-box tried the old man sorely; and many a time did I find him standing, when half-way up the ascent, recovering his breath, and looking enviously—if his gentle nature was capable of such a feeling—at the alert way in which we boys used to slip past him into the school.

My student-days began in Trafalgar Square, where I was the very first to enter my name in the probationers' book, and where, from 1837 to 1869, the

most successful, and consequently the happiest, part of my life was spent.

Apropos of Somerset House, I may relate a story that I heard of the great room there, the scene of the Exhibition of all the great English pictures, from Sir Joshua downwards. Round the walls was a wooden dado of such ancient construction that it had to be removed, and the whole room altered, for the occupation of the new tenants when it was changed into a Government office, as it now exists.

The dado had been so constructed as to leave a narrow space between it and the wall; and, on its removal, great numbers of empty purses, of ancient and modern make, were revealed—eloquent of successful pocket-picking and of the cleverness of the thieves in rapidly disposing of recognisable evidence.

I am sorry to say I cannot give a satisfactory account of my first appearance at Burlington House, where our first Exhibition took place in 1869. So sure were those in authority that the splendid galleries could not be filled with presentable pictures, that a vacant space was left round every exhibit—greatly to the advantage of each work, but the cause of the rejection of many meritorious pictures.

Times change, and we with them. That arrangement was never repeated; and at this time, 1887, good works are rejected from want of space.

My contributions were, besides "Hope" and "Fear," a "Scene from 'Don Quixote,'" where the

crazy knight finds the damsel Altisidora lying in the arms of a friend, in a pretended faint for love of him; fully believing in the lady's passion, he requests her friend (who declares the love-lorn damsel will not recover whilst the Don is by) to have a lute placed in his chamber, so that he may comfort her.

In my second picture I had an admirable subject, of its class, which I found in a work by Dr. Doran, where Nell Gwynne is described as selling oranges to the gallants and their ladies at the King's or the Duke's Theatre, and treating them to many a witty repartee, as well as oranges, in exchange for money and wit, readily offered.

My other contribution was a portrait of a friend. I changed his broadcloth into steel, and called him "A Man in Armour." The picture proved so strong a likeness that my friend was stopped in the street, questioned in omnibuses, and received other proofs of his identity with the picture, which was, and is, one of my best.

I had been so accustomed to compliments on my pictures from my brother artists, on the varnishing and private-view days, that my disappointment was very painful when I found this year's contributions received in silence. What could be the cause? I could not accuse myself of idleness or carelessness. My feelings may be imagined by the following from my diary:

"*Friday, April* 20.—Private view—never was I so dispirited. My pictures don't seem cared for, and I cannot understand it; I suppose I am going wrong."

The pictures were bought by Messrs. Agnew, and sold again at a profit, I hope; but this I found but a poor consolation. In endeavouring to discover the causes of comparative failure, a proceeding I recommend to the young and old painter, a strict survey should be made of the general conduct of work, and a decision arrived at as to whether the best efforts of the painter have been exercised in the production of his less successful pictures. I cannot accuse myself of carelessness, but I think I did too much, for I find that not only were three elaborate compositions painted in one year, but that I have to credit, or discredit, the year with the "Man in Armour," and also an elaborate little picture from "Twelfth Night," being the scene in which Sir Toby, Maria, Aguecheek and Fabian are watching Malvolio as he soliloquizes in the sun.

My diary says: "Try to do better; get newer subjects—all depends on subject."

The subject difficulty is apparent enough, for I find myself next employed on the well-worn character of Sir Roger de Coverley and the beautiful widow, a commission from my eccentric friend Mr. X——; and on a still more "used-up" theme, the well-known glove-shop episode in Sterne's "Sentimental Journey." I confess the "Grisette's Pulse" had afforded me a subject for one of my first attempts, now to be seen in the Jones Collection at South Kensington. This picture was exhibited at the British Institution, where no one asked the price of it. I then sent it to Birmingham, where

it was sold for thirty pounds. In due time the picture appeared at Christie's, where it was sold for six hundred guineas. My second treatment of the Sterne was changed, and so was the price I received for it, for, instead of thirty pounds, I received nine hundred from Mr. Coope, in whose collection it still remains.

It was at this time that the idea seized me of a famous modern-life subject, which I put down in rough pen-and-ink scratches, and afterwards developed into the series called "The Road to Ruin." I had been to Ascot, and been greatly struck by the legalized gambling on that famous race-course, feeling greatly puzzled, like so many of my fellow-creatures, to reconcile with the justice that we are taught to feel should always accompany law, the fact that men may do with impunity in one place what they are severely punished for if they do it in another. If men meet in Hyde Park for the purpose of betting, and are caught in the act, imprisonment will surely follow, though the stakes may only consist of a few shillings. In the Royal Enclosure at Ascot the "curled darlings of the nation" may sacrifice their maternal acres to any extent without fear of the law.

I remember asking a man learned in the law to explain this anomaly, and he acknowledged his inability, at the same time inquiring whether I was aware that there was one law for the rich and another for the poor.

With a view to the first of "The Road to Ruin"

series I went to Cambridge, where I saw a variety of students' rooms, of which photographs were taken; these proved of great service in the carrying out of the pictures—an operation which circumstances caused to be deferred for several years. On a visit to Baden in the year 1843 the gaming-tables were in full blast, and I remember feeling a strong desire to strike out a picture from them; but the subject appeared to me too difficult to be undertaken without much more experience than I had had at that time. When I found that my friend O'Neil was bent on a journey to Homburg, and I found also the tables were to be finally closed in two years from the year I am dealing with—1869—I felt it must be "now or never," if there was a chance for a true representation of the scene to be made. Accordingly to Homburg I travelled, and the following extract from a letter to my sister will give an idea of the first impression made upon me by the gamblers and their surroundings: ...

"My first sight of the clustering crowd round the tables shocked me exceedingly. Instead of the noisy, eager gamblers I expected to see, I found a quiet, business-like, unimpressionable set of people trying to get money without working for it—some, perhaps, playing to gratify the excitement of the gambling spirit, and indifferent as to the result, but the motive of the majority appeared to me a vulgar greediness after the stakes. Quite time, I thought, that a stop should be put to this, and a stop has

been put to it. But how about Ascot? Is England contented to be behind Germany in tolerating an exhibition even more demoralizing than the gambling-rooms at Homburg? I confess to a love of gambling, though I deny altogether the disposition to make money by it, and, shocked though I felt at the crowd round the tables in the Salon d'Or, I very soon made one amongst them—see the demoralizing effect!—but, as I never staked gold, I gratified my excitement without much risk. Great numbers of thalers I won, and as I continued gambling, I lost them all as a matter of course.

"'Soyez content d'un peu,' said the good-natured croupier."

I did better, for I bade adieu to the tables altogether, and amused myself by studying the people with a view to the picture, which afterwards appeared at Burlington House under the title of "The Salon d'Or." The picture was so popular as to require the protection of a rail, and I can truly say in its favour that, whatever may be its merits or demerits as a picture, it is a strictly true representation of a scene passed away for ever—a painful, even a degrading scene if you will, but one well deserving record as an example of legalized indulgence in one of the bad passions of human nature. The picture was bought by a Mr. Roffey, with a view to the publication of an engraving. An engraver was engaged—a man of some eminence when the subject was a dog or a horse, but whose experience in

respect of the human animal was so slight that he was quite at sea in his attempts to reproduce my unfortunate gamblers. I doubt if a worse print was ever made from a figure picture since the art of engraving was discovered, and the failure was complete.

Homburg was the innocent, or wicked, cause of another small artistic effort of mine. It was not very uncommon to see ladies sitting amongst the orange-trees smoking cigarettes. I was attracted to one—a very pretty one—whose efforts to light her cigarette being unavailing, called to a waiter for a light. A candle was brought, and as the fair smoker stooped to it she presented such a pretty figure, and altogether so paintable an appearance, that I could not resist a momentary sketch, afterwards elaborated into a small picture. I think Hogarth would have made a picture of such an incident, with the addition, perhaps, of matter unpresentable to the present age. It might have adorned our National Gallery, whilst I was mercilessly attacked for painting such a subject at all. I knew very well that if I or any other painter dared to introduce certain incidents (such as bristle over Hogarth's works) into our pictures, they would have no chance of shocking the public that admires the Hogarths on the walls in Trafalgar Square, for the Council of the Royal Academy would prevent any such catastrophe.

Before I take leave of Homburg, I may add, for the information of the student, that to insure the

verisimilitude of the scene of the "Salon d'Or" I had large photographs made of the room. I am at this moment writing in one of the chairs from the gaming-table. I secured one of the croupier's rakes and empty rouleau-cases, with other material necessary for my work; I also sought, and found, models for every figure. I cannot call attention too often to the absolute necessity for taking full advantage of the assistance that preliminary care affords in every work of art.

I had nearly forgotten an incident connected with the "Salon d'Or" picture that may amuse. In the immediate foreground sits a roué who turns to a lady standing by him, with whom he seems to have tender relations, and places in her hand some bank-notes, evidently—from his smiling countenance—the result of his winnings. The lady receives the money, but whether for the purpose of risking it again or not, does not appear. The model for the lady was a handsome dark girl whose name I forget. She was rather a stupid person, as what I am about to relate will prove. The figure was about half-finished, when my model suddenly announced her approaching marriage.

"I congratulate you," said I. "When is it to be?"

"Next Wednesday."

"Been long engaged?" inquired I.

"No, sir. I've no engagements after to-day."

"That's not what I mean. How long have you known your intended husband?"

"About a month."

"What is he?"

"Don't know."

"Good gracious! Do you know you are going to run a terrible risk?'

"All weddings is risks," replied my philosopher.

Then came the withering idea over me that the husband might refuse to let his wife sit; and if that should be, where was I? So I gravely recommenced the conversation.

"Now, you know, when an artist begins a picture from a particular person" ("Not that you are such a very particular person," thought I), "it is absolutely necessary he should finish it from the model from whom he has begun his work. I do hope you will not do me the injury of not giving me the opportunity of finishing what I have begun from you. You will sit for me after your marriage, won't you?"

"Oh yes. I told him I wouldn't have him if I was to give up sitting."

"That's right! Well, then, when can you come to see me again?"

"Well, I can't exactly say, because I have promised to sit for young this, and young that, after we come back from Margate."

"I thought you said you had no engagements!"

"Ah, I meant before Wednesday."

"Suppose we say this day month," I proposed.

"Right you are," said my model. "This day month I'll be here."

As I heard nothing in the interval, it was with

some trepidation that I prepared for my sitter on the appointed day; and it was with much satisfaction that, as the clock struck ten, I saw the lady walk into my studio. We got to work immediately, and I found the model—never very talkative—more gloomy than ever.

"Well," said I, after a while, "how do you like married life? I hope you are happy. How does the husband turn out?"

"Oh, I don't know. He's that jealous——"

"Jealous!" echoed I.

"Yes, sir. He bothers my life out with his questions. He always wants to know where I been, what I done, what the artists says to me, and all like that. He torments me dreadful."

"Jealous!" I repeated. "Not jealous of the artists you sit to?"

"Yes; he is downright jealous of every one of 'em!"

"Well," said I, "he will be all right to-night, at all events, for he knew you were coming here. He won't be jealous of me, I suppose?"

"Oh no," said the candid young person. "It's the young ones he's jealous of. He don't mind how many old gents like you I sit to."

My contributions to the Exhibition of 1871 were the "Salon d'Or," a scene from "Kenilworth," a half-length figure of Gabrielle d'Estrée, and some smaller matter. The "Kenilworth" subject contained two figures—Amy Robsart and her maid Janet, who was represented adorning her mistress previous to

one of Leicester's visits to Cumnor Place. The model for Amy Robsart was the ill-starred Mrs. Rousby—a most beautiful creature—who may be remembered by many of my readers as an actress of merit, whose career, so full of bright promise, was brought to a sad close by her early death. I knew her before she appeared upon the stage, and those who saw her afterwards—lovely as she was—can have but a faint idea of her extraordinary beauty as a young girl. Whatever the cause may have been—before illness drove her from public life—her beauty had faded to such an extent as to throw doubt upon those who asserted her claims to supreme loveliness before she entered upon the stage life. I shall never forget the vision of beauty that burst upon us when she entered the drawing-room at Pembridge Villas on her first visit here.

I painted her in the character of Queen, or rather Princess, Elizabeth, in Tom Taylor's play "'Twixt Axe and Crown." In spite of repeated efforts the beauty quite escaped me, though in other respects the picture was like. As some one said of Wilkie (who had no appreciation of female beauty), "He has made his portrait of Lady Blank" (a great beauty) "very like, barring her beauty, which he has left out altogether."

I think I may say that Amy Robsart, as represented in my "Kenilworth" picture, was a pretty creature not unlike my model; and though not so lovely, a good deal of her beauty was displayed. If these lines should meet the eye of the owner

of the picture—an unknown quantity to me—he may be pleased to know these details about it.

My diary for May 1, 1871, says:

"To R.A., where, to my great delight, I find what I expected, and even more. Such a crowd as I have not seen since the 'Derby Day,' and a policeman to protect the picture. In all probability a rail must be put."

And on May 3 I find:

"This morning sees a rail put to my picture. This is the fourth railed-in and railed-at picture—and this without my stir. Now to try again."

No one could feel the invidious nature of the special mark of popularity that a rail round a picture implied more than I did, and often and often did I beg the Academy, in conclave assembled, to consent to the placing of rails round all the rooms, and again and again I was defeated. The delight of the solitary rail triumph is now gone for ever, for the long-deferred protection is afforded now in every gallery; and what opened Academic eyes to the necessity for it, was the injury done by some malicious person to the pictures in the Exhibition of 1886. Cuts and scratches, nearly always about three feet from the ground, were plentifully bestowed on several pictures, apparently by some instrument easily held close to the pictures as the perpetrator of the mischief walked past them. This little amusement will now be difficult, if not impossible, for anyone to indulge in without the risk of immediate detection.

Strange to say, a similar performance was enacted

in or about the year 1843. The injuries were inflicted upon pictures by wounds almost identical with those of 1886—the same distance from the floor, and of the same character. Some of them, however, were more serious than those of 1886, notably in one instance of a very beautiful small "Portrait of a Gentleman," by Corbet, of Shrewsbury—a well-known excellent painter of small, highly-finished portraits. The eyes in the picture were destroyed by cutting them down to the panel on which the portrait was painted. The criminal was never discovered, but it was observed by that born joker, Charles Landseer, that the destroyer of the eyes in Corbet's picture was most likely a schoolmaster in want of *pupils!* "Another such joke as that, and we will all vote for your expulsion," said one of a group of Academicians standing by.

I cannot refrain from staining my paper with another of C. L.'s perpetrations. A picture was exhibited of a parting between two lovers; the gentleman's horse is at the door, and as the rider is about to mount "and ride away," he is exchanging farewell vows with his love, who is leaning tenderly towards him out of a window immediately above the door. So constructed was the house by the artist (who was certainly no architect) that there was no space whatever for the lower part of the lady's person between the bottom of the window and the top of the door.

"Look!" said I to Landseer, "there is no place for the woman to stand in."

"She's the man's sweetheart, *notwithstanding*," replied the punster.

No sooner are the year's pictures launched before the public than I find myself hard at work in "fresh woods and pastures new." I found a good subject in Froude, who relates—on the authority of a French chronicler, I think—an incident in the career of that man of many wives, Henry VIII.—a trifling matter, but well adapted to pictorial representation. The chronicler says that Queen Anne Boleyn often accompanied her gentle husband on his deer-shooting expeditions in Windsor Forest. It occurred to me to place the royal couple, crossbow in hand, in a kind of leafy shelter, half-hidden by branches and bracken, waiting for the deer to be driven past them. I made Anne Boleyn stooping forward, her crossbow ready, whilst the King behind her is putting back an intruding branch, as he lovingly looks down at the head that soon after followed suit amongst the falling heads of that fearful time. The figures were dressed in green, entailing much difficulty, as in the landscape — though touched by "Autumn's fiery finger"—much green predominated; and if I did not succeed in producing what in the slang of to-day is called a "harmony in green," I made a nearer approach to an agreeable arrangement than many of the inexplicable nocturnes and symphonies that are too often presented to us now. Authorities for the likeness of Henry and his hapless Queen are plentiful. Lord Denbigh possesses a lovely portrait of Anne Boleyn by Holbein, and from a photograph of that picture, together with a well-selected model, I made a tolerable likeness.

My friend Sir William Hardman played the part of the King, for that occasion only. The learned Chairman of the Court of Quarter Sessions wore a beard at the time I speak of, which disfigured him into a strong resemblance to Henry VIII. I took advantage of the beard, and then endeavoured to induce the wearer to remove it; and though I have not seen Sir William lately, I am told the hirsute deformity has disappeared. Lady Hardman's head is still in its natural place, and her husband is very amiable in private life, so the resemblance to the bloodthirsty King ceases with the beard.

The dramatists of the Restoration, notably Congreve, Wycherley, Vanbrugh, and Farquhar, though mainly painters of the manners of a dissolute time, have always been attractive to me as presenting subjects for pictures; and it occurred to me and a fellow-student to take up one of the plays of Vanbrugh, and illustrate every scene of it by slight water-colour sketches. Many were the evenings we spent over this labour of love. We always compared our renderings of the same points, and wondered at the dissimilarity of our conceptions. Better practice in composition of light and shadow cannot be recommended to the student. Though many, indeed most, of the scenes were unworthy of the labour required to reproduce them as oil pictures, I owe one of my best dramatic pictures to Vanbrugh's "Relapse"—the play that my friend and I chose for illustration. The scene chosen is that in which Lord Foppington describes his way of passing his time to the two

ladies of the piece, Amanda and Berinthia, and that inconstant gentleman Loveless.

The satins and brocades, the wigs and swords of Queen Anne's time, afford seductive material for the painter; and I think I took full advantage of them, and produced a very satisfactory picture. After passing through several hands, it is now in the possession of one of the Brasseys; but whether the peer of that name or his brother, I know not.

CHAPTER II.

REJECTED SUBJECTS.

My summer holiday in 1871 was spent at Boulogne, where I found a subject for a large composition suggested by the annual procession in honour of the Virgin patroness of the town. The Bishop, with attending priests, numberless banners, living representatives of Scriptural personages, wooden copies of holy things, and every variety of Catholic ritual, together with crowds of votaries in long procession, parade the town; and as they go, women bring their children, well or ailing, to be blessed by the chief priest. The scene was brilliant in colour, and picturesque in every sense of the word. I think it was one of the Popes who, on giving his blessing to an unbeliever in its efficacy, said, "An old man's blessing can do you no harm." Judging from the eagerness of the mothers to obtain the Bishop's blessing, and the benign dignity with which it was bestowed, both giver and receiver had perfect faith in happy results from it. I made many sketches; and the longer I thought of the subject, the stronger became my determination to paint a picture of it. On inquiring how it came about that the Boulognese

had arrogated to themselves so special a right to the particular protection of the Virgin, I was told that some centuries ago a boat was seen one night at sea, off the harbour of Boulogne, emitting a brilliant light from its bow. Some sailors put off to examine the singular apparition, and on nearing it, to their awe-stricken astonishment, they found that the light proceeded from a figure of the Blessed Virgin, sitting solitary in the boat. The men towed the boat into the harbour, and the figure—made of wood—was conveyed to the cathedral, where it now remains, or I should rather say where rests all that remains of it; for the freethinkers of the Revolution had so little respect for the holy relic, that they destroyed the greater part of it, leaving only one of the hands, in the possession of which the cathedral still rejoices.

Peace having been signed between Germany and France, enabled me to go to Paris with comfort and safety. I found terrible traces of the war. A German sentinel paced backwards and forwards at the station at Criel. In Paris itself, the huge stones of the bridge of Neuilly were so knocked to pieces that the passage of it was dangerous. Porte Maillot was a heap of rubbish, and St. Cloud did not contain a habitable dwelling. The Tuileries, so dear to my youthful recollections, had been mercilessly injured by the dreadful Commune. Douglas Jerrold said the liberty of England was preserved in brine—the brine being the British Channel. The effects of war make one value "the silver streak" that separates happy England from Continental strife.

My time at Boulogne was mostly spent in reading, with the result of a subject from the life of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. That celebrated beauty and writer was visited early one morning by her father, the Duke of Kingston. The visit was a surprise, for the lady was not fully dressed. Her daughter, afterwards Lady Bute, in describing the scene, says that though she was quite a child at the time, she well remembers the stately Duke appearing suddenly in her mother's dressing-room, and the immediate sinking of her mother on her knees, asking and receiving her father's blessing. I represented Lady Mary in her brocade dressing-gown, the Duke with the star always worn at that time by those entitled to it, whilst the future Lady Bute, still in her toy-time, plays about the floor. This picture was bought by George Moore, well known for his active philanthropy, whose sad death a few years ago was deplored by all who knew him, and by numbers whose knowledge of the man was only derived from his acts of beneficence.

My contributions to the Academy in 1872 consisted of the scene from Vanbrugh, "Lady Mary Wortley Montagu," and, most successful of all, a small picture of Boulogne fruit-girls, entitled "At my Window, Boulogne." To the window of our lodgings came two girls, carrying large flat baskets of grapes and peaches. They were dressed in effective costumes, with the high-frilled cap common to their species, and had bright pretty faces. As they stood in the street resting their baskets on the

window-sill—the open window forming a frame for them—they made "quite a picture." I bought many peaches and grapes, and the girl's dresses and caps also; and judging from the many demands I received for the picture, and the compliments paid me upon it, I think I may consider it one of my best.

An amusing trifle might be written in which overheard remarks made in public galleries upon the works displayed would surprise by their *naïveté*, and also by the surpassing ignorance of the speakers. Here is an example told me by my old friend Faed, R.A., whose delightful renderings of Scottish life are so well known. Some few years ago, Faed exhibited a picture called "His only Pair." A small Scotch boy sits with dangling naked legs upon a table, whilst his mother mends his only pair of breeks. The urchin is vigorously sucking an orange to beguile the time of waiting. Two female visitors to the Exhibition were in front of the picture. One held the catalogue, and in reply to her friend's inquiry: "What is the subject?" replied:

"'His only Pair.'"

"*Pear?*" said the connoisseur. "It looks more like an orange."

Another example occurs to me. A fine portrait of Mrs. Charles Dickens, painted by Maclise, was exhibited in Trafalgar Square. I happened to be close to two ladies who were eagerly scanning the picture, which by a misprint in the catalogue was called "*Mr.* Charles Dickens."

"Why," said one of the visitors, "it is a portrait of a lady; it can't be *Mr.* Charles Dickens!"

"Oh yes, it is," replied her friend. "You know he is a great actor, as well as writer; and the picture represents him in some female character. I wonder what the play was."

Yet another instance. A friend of mine exhibited a picture called "A Volunteer." The scene was the deck of a shipwrecked vessel. It is crowded by terrified people—apparently emigrants. One of the sailors has volunteered to swim ashore, and is on the point of leaving the ship, carrying a rope to be attached, probably, to some life-saving apparatus.

"A *volunteer?*" said an enlightened looker-on. "That's no volunteer—where are his regimentals?"

In an exhibition, some years ago, I put in an appearance with a small work of a girl with a dove on her shoulder. The girl was a gentle-looking, rather dove-like creature; so I christened the picture "Two Doves." I heard a lady who was looking at it say:

"Two doves? Why, that must be a misprint. Where is the second dove?"

I know some of my younger brethren who *were* fond of standing by their pictures to listen to the remarks made upon them. I say *were* fond of the practice. But the desire to hear genuine opinion seldom lasts long; for though, in the course of an hour, you may hear pleasant things, your satisfaction will be pretty sure to be marred by remarks the reverse of complimentary.

An artist, who seldom paints anything but what are called "religious subjects," saw some ladies eagerly scanning his work, when a gentleman friend came up to them and said:

"What's that? Oh, a Scripture piece. Don't waste time with that—it's very bad. All their Scripture pictures are shocking!"

My friend the sacred painter has no respect for public opinion.

The fact of its being "the thing" to go to the Academy Exhibition takes great numbers there who care for art just as much as they know about it, and that is nothing at all.

A year or two ago I was standing in the Great Gallery at Burlington House, when two young gentlemen sauntered into it. Then each, standing in the middle of the room, threw languid glances round the walls; and one said to the other:

"The things are all very much alike. Come away," and they went away.

It was my fate in the year 1872 to serve on the Hanging Committee—never anything but a painful duty; that year peculiarly so, from the many good pictures (in my opinion, good pictures) that were sent back to their producers, there being no room for them on the walls. And, strange to say, the bad pictures offered to us were as much worse than usual, as the more successful ones were better. The very worst attempts at painting produced in this country—or any other—were submitted to the Committee for acceptance. Amongst the rest were

some drawings said to be done by spirits. They were painted in water-colours, and handsomely framed and glazed, of course, at a considerable expense. They were quite indescribable, resembling nothing in heaven above or on the earth beneath, and were necessarily laughed out of the rooms. Now, it does appear to me that the spirits must have known that their works would be beyond our comprehension, and, therefore, sure to be rejected; why, then, suffer their proselytes to be at the mercy of such ignorant people as ourselves? to say nothing of the unnecessary trouble and expense incurred by the proprietors of such spiritual things!

The practice of the Academy as regards the reception of works intended for exhibition is so well known, as to make what I am about to tell almost incredible. It is nevertheless true that a lady took a small picture to Burlington House, on the day named for receiving pictures, and showed it to one of the porters, telling him it was for exhibition.

"All right madam," said the man, offering to receive the picture.

"No, no!" said the lady. "I must hang it myself. It has been painted for a particular light; and I wish to select the proper place and light myself."

That work—perhaps a great picture—disappeared with its producer, and was seen no more.

I conclude my remarks on the eccentricity of public judgment in the matter of the subject of pictures, by the following example:

The play of the "Colleen Bawn" may be familiar to many of my readers, and they will remember that an attempt was made to drown the heroine by a person called Danny Man. Just at the time that the play was in the full swing of its popularity, a fine picture by Paul Delaroche was exhibited, called "A Christian Martyr." Death by drowning was the fate awarded to the unfortunate Christian, who was represented as a beautiful young girl, just on the point of sinking to a "muddy death." I have again to accuse the gentler sex of a ludicrous mistake, for I heard one lady say to another:

"Oh, what a beautiful Irish face! Look, there's the Colleen Bawn; and that man on the bank is that wretch Danny Man, gloating over her, poor thing!"

My desire to discover materials for my work in modern life never leaves me, and will continue its influence as long as my own life lasts; and, though I have occasionally been betrayed by my love into themes somewhat trifling and commonplace, the conviction that possessed me that I was speaking—or rather painting—the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, rendered the production of real-life pictures an unmixed delight. In obedience to this impulse I began a small work suggested by some lady-archers, whose feats had amused me at the seaside. I found sufficiently satisfactory models in three of my daughters, one of whom is in the act of shooting, the others standing by, bow in hand; a landscape background foils the figures agree-

ably enough. The subject was trifling, and totally devoid of character-interest; but the girls are true to nature, and the dresses will be a record of the female habiliments of the time.

I made my desire for subjects for pictures so generally known—even offering large rewards for suggestions (the only condition being that they should be such as I considered worthy of representation)—that I was often the recipient of strange advice. A stranger called on me, when a conversation like the following took place:

"Sir," said the man; "I have been told that you are willing to pay for a fine subject for a picture. What would you be disposed to give for one about as big as your 'Railway Station'?"

"If," said I, "you can propose to me a subject for a picture of the size and importance of the one you name or of the 'Derby Day,' I will give you two hundred pounds for it. What is your subject?"

"Well, sir, I should be satisfied with the terms you mention, but the subject is my secret; and I hardly like to mention it, because I should not like it to be known, if you were to refuse it."

"Oh," I replied, "I will give you my promise not to reveal it, if it is worth keeping secret; and I also promise to pay you the sum I name in the event of my painting it. What is it?"

After further hesitation my visitor said:

"A review in Hyde Park!"

"I am afraid," said I, "there is no novelty in that

—it has been done pretty often, in illustrated papers and in pictures."

As the man was evidently sincere in his belief that he had discovered a treasure, I tried to enlighten him regarding some essentials without which his subject would be "stale, flat, and unprofitable."

"There must be a main incident of dramatic force, and secondary ones of interest. How could such be evolved from troops manœuvring and a crowd looking on?"

"Ah," said he, "I've thought of all that. I'll tell you how to do it. I should have in front—what you call the foreground, ain't it?—a man selling ginger-beer. You must make him just opening a bottle; the beer must be very much up—hot day, and that—and so the cork flies into a woman's eye; and then——"

"That is enough!" said I. "I don't think your subject would suit me. But if I ever paint a picture of it, you shall have the reward I have promised."

"Well, but wait a bit, sir. Just you think, now—there might be a fat woman paying threepence for a stand, and the stand breaks down, and she wants her money back; and the stand-man says he'll be——"

"Yes, I know; but, really, I won't take up any more of your time. Mine is also valuable, so I must wish you good-morning."

On another occasion I was favoured with a visit from a respectable-looking man, also big with a

subject. After preliminary arrangements, and promises of reward, the idea was disclosed:

> "'There's a sweet little cherub that sits up aloft,
> Keeping watch o'er the life of poor Jack.'"

"A cherub!" said I. "I never saw a cherub; don't know what a cherub is like—do you? Perhaps you are not aware that artists don't trust to their imagination for models; at least, I don't. So what am I to do for a model for your cherub?"

"A cherub," said the man, with the confidence of one well acquainted with such people, "is a naked child; and you should paint him sitting on the tip-top of the mast of a big ship. You needn't put in the hull of the vessel—just a yard-arm, and a bit of sail torn away by the storm; a black sky, and the lightning and thunder"—("Difficult," thought I, "to paint thunder as to represent the same woman doing three different things, as proposed in the review subject")—"going it like anything. The mast should be rocking, and the cherub holding on to it like grim death, smiling all the while at the sailors below."

As the man spoke, my mind, in search of an authority for the cherub, wandered to certain monumental representations of those creatures; and, unless my memory betrayed me, the difficulty of sitting on the tip-top of a mast, or, indeed, of sitting at all, was quite apparent in all of them. I hinted as much, and my friend said:

"Ah, to be sure! I never thought of that. Well,

he must have wings, you know—they all have—and he might be flying about the mast. Wouldn't that do?"

"Very well. Only what becomes of your quotation, which says your sweet little cherub is *sitting* aloft?"

I was again obliged to confess that the subject proposed was beyond my powers.

The name of Whiteley, universal provider, by whom a large portion of Westbourne Grove has been made into a huge establishment, is known all over the world. I have cause to know it, because my requirements are often supplied from the emporium presided over by that extraordinary man; but till what I am about to relate took place, I never knew him in the flesh.

A letter was brought to me, asking for an interview on "a matter of business," signed "William Whiteley." I was much puzzled as to what the "business" could be, as I owed Mr. Whiteley nothing at the time; indeed, the principles on which he conducts his business are such as to prevent the possibility of anybody owing Mr. Whiteley anything for an unreasonable time.

Punctually at 9.30, the appointed hour, the great trader made his appearance, and a shrewd, smart, honest appearance it is.

"Well, Mr. Whiteley," said I, "I am glad to see you" (I was both glad and curious). "What can I do for you?"

"Sir," said he, "I am an admirer of your works."

"I reciprocate the compliment," said I. "I sincerely admire yours."

Mr. Whiteley bowed, and proceeded to say that he had seen "Ramsgate Sands," and he greatly admired the variety of character, the—etc., etc. He had also seen the "Railway Station," about which he was complimentary to an extent that my modesty prevents my repeating; and he admired so-and-so—running through a whole catalogue of my pictures—ending by proposing a subject for a picture, to be called "Whiteley's at Four o'Clock in the Afternoon."

"I should leave it to your discretion, sir, to choose either the inside of the place or the outside. If you take the former, you would have the aristocracy making their purchases. You might introduce the young ladies who do me the honour to assist in my establishment, many of whom are very pretty. Then there are what are called shopmen, with fine heads, and every conceivable detail for your back and foregrounds. If, on the other hand, you select the outside of the shops, you could introduce the commissionaires, who, as you may have observed, wear a picturesque livery created by me; you would have the nobility and gentry stepping into their carriages, with—forgive my suggestions, they are subject to your criticism—street beggars, toy-sellers—think of the contrast between them and my customers—and all the variety of character that Westbourne Grove always presents. There is but one stipulation that I venture to make if you select Westbourne Grove for the locality of the work, namely, that the whole

length of the shops should be shown, care being taken that the different windows should display the specialities of the establishment."

As I listened to this extraordinary proposal, I found myself wondering if the proposed picture was intended to act as an advertisement for Whiteley's, when, as if he read my thoughts, Mr. Whiteley said:

"I never advertise; I never spent a shilling in that way in my life. My notions of the advantage of advertising take the form of good things at so small a profit as to make the purchasers recommend their friends to come to my shops; and I have found that method of advertising so satisfactory that I feel no inclination to spend the enormous sums that some of my brethren in trade find, or think they find, profitable."

He then proceeded to inform me that he began in a very small way of business in a street off Westbourne Grove, with only two shop-girls to assist.

"I married one," said he, "and the other—no longer a girl—is still with me."

I was greatly interested in my visitor, and sorry that an engagement with my usual ten-o'clock model afforded me so little time to say much more than that I would consider his proposal and let him know the result. I thought the matter over, and declined the commission, and have often thought since, that though I should fear to undertake it, much might have been done with it. And if Mr. Whiteley should read my account of our interview, I hope he will forgive me for relating it in conjunction with

the ridiculous proposals already mentioned. I think his suggestion by no means absurd, but very much the contrary; and I also hope he will acknowledge that, in the telling of it, I have extenuated nothing, nor "set down aught in malice."

During the trial of the Tichborne Claimant a subject was proposed to me. I may here remark that when a painter is hard at work, visitors should be resolutely excluded. I have a wife who guards me in that respect like a dragon, and I am thus saved from interruptions which, though they may take up but little time, cause a wrench from one's work that is not only painful, but injurious. So when, one day, my servant informed me that a Captain N—— wanted to see me on a matter of business, I sent my "fidus Achates" to inquire what the business was. When I heard that my visitor came, on the part of a committee, to offer me a commission on my own terms to paint a large modern subject, I put down palette and brushes, full of curiosity to know the nature of the proposal.

I found Captain N—— to be unmistakably a gentleman, curiously reluctant to disclose his subject till I would promise to paint a picture of it. The reluctance was surmounted, and I found it was proposed that I should paint the trial of the Tichborne Claimant, then drawing very near its close; the main object being the exhibition of the picture in London and the country, to procure funds for the defence of "my ill-used friend," as Captain N—— called him.

"You will have no difficulty as to sitters, Mr. Frith.

The jury have agreed to give you every opportunity; the Judge—Cockburn, you know—has been sounded, and has expressed no objection; the barristers employed have consented; and the Claimant is only too anxious to see the work confided to you."

"Well, but," said I, "the trial, surely, cannot last much longer; it may be over any day. And suppose your friend is condemned, he would not be allowed to come here, and I could not go to him."

"You may rest assured there is not the least chance of an adverse verdict. We will take the risk of that."

"Indeed," said I; "I don't share your confidence in the favourable result of the trial. I have read all the evidence, and I think the Claimant will be severely punished; and I hope you won't mind my saying that I think he richly deserves what in all probability he will get."

"Do you indeed?" said Captain N——, not in the least annoyed. "Then you don't believe him to be Sir Roger Tichborne?"

"No, I don't. Do you?"

"Well, I can't say I *believe* him to be the real man, because I am quite sure of it; indeed, I wonder how you or anyone else can reconcile the unimpeachable evidence in my friend's favour with the idea of imposture. Now, though I have not the honour of your acquaintance, I don't think you will doubt that what I am about to tell you is absolutely true; and when you have heard it, I shall be curious to know how you can doubt that

the man now on his trial is Sir Roger Tichborne. I must tell you that Sir Roger is now living with me; we constantly pass together the time that does not require his presence in Court. Well, so recently as the day before yesterday, I went to my tailors to pay my account; and as I was writing my cheque, the head of the firm—a staunch believer, by the way—asked me if the evidence of one who had seen the real Sir Roger (to use the common phrase) before he left the country on his supposed fatal voyage, would be of service as a witness, as a man, now in the employment of a firm of tailors called Bugby and Haynes, was ready and willing to go to the Court and swear—as he was justified in doing, having seen the Claimant in the street—to his identity with the Sir Roger whom he well remembered. I thanked my informant, but said that as so many had recognised Sir Roger, another voice on the same side was scarcely worth consideration. However, on thinking the matter over, I felt curious to see the man, as he might be possessed of some convincing proof beyond that of mere recognition. I accordingly sought out the establishment of Messrs. Bugby and Haynes, and found the man I sought in the foreman of the concern, to which twenty years before he had been in the inferior position of porter.

"'I hear,' said I, 'you are willing to give evidence in favour of Sir Roger Tichborne? Have you any evidence in his favour beyond your power of recognising him? How and where did you see him as a young man?'

"'I will show you,' said he, as he took down an old ledger; 'here you see, sir, is an entry of a pair of leather breeches (we dealt in nothing else then, leather breeches being our speciality) supplied to Roger Tichborne, then on a visit to Sir James Tyrrell in St. James's Square. I took home those breeches and delivered them to the young gentleman, and he carefully examined them before he would pay the bill. I looked well at him then, and again afterwards when he called to say he had tried the breeches and liked them very much.'

"'Well, I will let you know if you are wanted.'

"Last evening I was writing a note in my chambers. Sir Roger was reading opposite to me, when it occurred to me to question him about the leather breeches; and I proceeded to do so, as cautiously as I thought an opposing barrister might do.

"'By the way, Sir Roger,' said I, 'what tailor did you patronize when you were in London? Were your clothes made in London?'

"'Sometimes—generally indeed,' was the reply.

"'Do you remember the name of your tailor?'

"'Yes, Stultz, always.'

"'Then you never dealt with the firm of Bugby and Haynes?'

"'Haynes and what—Bugby?—precious ugly name that. No, never heard of 'em,' and he continued his reading and I my writing—disappointed I confess, for as he had remembered Stultz, it was not likely he could have forgotten the others. In a minute or so I happened to look from my note to

Sir Roger, who had closed his book and seemed absorbed in thought. Then he said:

"'What names did you say?'

"I repeated them.

"'Well,' said he, 'I begin to have a faint recollection of some such people who made nothing but leather breeches, and—to be sure—I remember now quite well being supplied with a pair when I was stopping with Tyrrell in St. James's Square. Tyrrell recommended the tailors, and capital breeches they were. I rode more than fifteen hundred miles in those breeches, and then they were not worn out.'

"Now, sir," said Captain N—— to me; "how do you get over that?"

I confess I was staggered, but subsequent reflection supplied an explanation. The impostor had free access—afforded him by old Lady Tichborne—to bills and papers of every description, and he must have seen the account for the leather breeches amongst them.

Though the price offered me for painting the trial of the Claimant was a very tempting one, I declined it; and it was well I did, for my intended sitter was very soon after my interview with Captain N——, picking oakum instead of sitting for his picture.

Amongst the suggestions for the employment of my brush was one to be called "All Over but the Shouting." This came to me anonymously; and the theme was to be a cricket-match at Lord's—Harrow and Eton, I think. I was advised to paint

the end of the game, when all but the shouting is supposed to be over. The advantage of carriages full of ladies getting luncheon, charming young Harrow boys comparing notes with octogenarian Harrow boys, *cum multis aliis*, were pointed out to me in vain; for I neglected this well-meant suggestion, as I have felt compelled to refuse many others.

The University Boat Race has been named to me as a good subject many times, and in a sense it is a good one; and if I had not painted the "Derby Day," I might be tempted to try it. But a little reflection will show that the incidents on the river-banks would be too much like those at Epsom to enable one to avoid the odious charge of repetition.

As an example not only of the kindness of people in proposing subjects, but also of their suggestions as to the way in which the pictures arising from them should be painted, I subjoin the following paragraphs, which reached me exactly as they are reproduced:

"About half an hour before the start. Hammersmith Bridge (as large as possible) right across the picture, at the extreme left."

"The bridge, with its wonderful freight, clearly seen from the Mall; men on the chains; carriages of every description.

"A steamboat half through the bridge, decorated with small flags, and having on board a band playing, and passengers; the funnel lowered."

"A boat with people seated in, and a fat woman being helped in. The boat is all on one side; the apparent fright of those seated.

"Many boats are by the Mall-wall waiting to carry people to the barges.

"The Thames police-boat clearing the way.

"Two or three four-oared crews and wager-boats. Barges with people on them.

"Steamers and barges decorated with flags."

"The houses on the Mall, namely,

Bridge House,
Digby ,,
Beach ,,
Ashton ,,
Ivy Cottage,
Kent House,

would all come out admirably.

"The Mall to be widened two or three feet, and the houses that slope back to be brought forward as far as the public-house. The Mall is not crowded until just before the race."

"Blue and red cloth along the balconies, and at the windows. Lovely women with race-glasses in their hands, some in blue silk.

"A lovely young woman in balcony, dressed in light violet velvet, with a beautiful white Maltese dog in her arms, and having the Oxford ribbon round his neck; with the sun shining on her she would look most brilliant."

"Ladies and gentlemen in every variety of

clothing, some in winter, others in summer; numbers of children, some sitting along the Mall-wall with their feet nearly touching the water.

"Nigger with wooden leg, and white hat with wide band of light blue paper round it; he is carrying his fiddle.

"Girl with her intended; his arm round her waist. Dog, evidently lost."

"Two sweeps standing together, one smoking a short clay, very white, new pipe, and the other filling one, each with Oxford rosette in front of his cap.

"A man with tin can selling hot meat-pies. A boy has just bought one, and is holding it on the palm of his hand, looking at it with delight. A man standing by has bitten a large piece out of one, and discovered a dead mouse, which he is holding by the tail between his fingers, and is showing the man the hole it came out of. The pieman is laughing; the other is in a rage."

"Three men standing together, one holding a pot of beer in pewter; the other two are tossing to see who is to pay. One is holding the coin tightly between his hands, the other is looking doubtfully at a coin in his hand."

"An old lady in Bath-chair. A little rascal is trying to force her to buy some fusees, putting them close to her face. A girl, on the other side, trying to force her to buy colours; the old lady looking most indignant; her attendant is talking to a girl.

"A young swell smoking a beautifully coloured merschaum pipe, with a thief on each side of him. The one on his left puts both his hands on the swell's shoulders, and is laughing; the swell turns his head to see the cause. The one on his right is stealing his pin; a policeman standing close by is ordering a little girl to move on."

"An old gentleman standing near the houses, who has been robbed of his watch; he is examining the ring of his watch which is left on his chain; he has his tortoiseshell-glasses across his nose; a little boy is watching him.

"A girl with a child asleep in a perambulator; boys teasing her.

"Gent and a girl standing together, the girl drinking from a flask.

"Tall soldier with his short girl."

"A workman standing next a lady; the smoke from his pipe blowing into her face; her peculiar expression.

"Girl with baskets of buttonholes, and others with the race colours."

If I were to expatiate further, and give other examples of the propensity for proposing subjects to known painters, I should only weary my readers. None but painters know the extreme difficulty of the selection of a moment of time that shall be of sufficient interest and importance to warrant months, and perhaps years, being spent upon a representation of it. I have never been able to adopt one of the

innumerable proposals made to me. Literary men, who should know better, always propose subjects that are inexplicable, unless the painter could adopt the method used in the old caricatures, namely, a kind of balloon-shaped form coming from the mouths of the actors in the scene, enclosing the words they are supposed to be saying. All pictures should, as a rule, tell their own story without the aid of book or quotation, though in some instances, no doubt, quotation is necessary for the understanding of the picture.

My contributions to the Exhibition of 1873 were unimportant, consisting of the "Lady Archers," already noted; a modern billiard-room, with two ladies playing; and studies of French and English flower-girls.

"The Procession at Boulogne" then occupied my thoughts and time, and my diary records my struggles with the subject, day after day, till the time for "sending in" in 1874. I fear I have little of interest to relate regarding the progress of that work. My model for the principal figure was the Abbé Toursel, a very delightful old priest, who, with his nephew, proved the most patient of sitters; and I was fortunate enough to find other good French models.

The small army of London models finds many Italians in its ranks, and, as a rule, they are amongst the steadiest and most patient, both men and women; but heaven preserve me from the boys! One young gentleman took great delight in tormenting me by incessant fidgeting, *pretending* to go to sleep, and

twisting his countenance into every conceivable distortion. Neither coaxing nor bullying produced any effect. He turned a deaf ear to my complaints, remarking on one occasion that he was glad my picture was a big one, otherwise he would expect it to be thrown at his head, as "Mr. Poynter threatened the other day." The best thing the boy did for me was to bring me his uncle, a person whose occupation in his own country had been that of a brigand, which calling he had pursued until he was so eagerly sought for by the Italian authorities that a sudden absence from his native land became imperative; and he found an asylum in England, and employment amongst the painters. He was an amusing fellow—making no secret of his former profession. He was forced into it, he said, by Garibaldi; and, in reply to my inquiry as to how that came about, he informed me that he was in the Italian army when the King of Naples was driven off by the Garibaldians; and, being very averse to revolutionary doings, and quite determined never to assist in them, he and several of his comrades took to the mountains, where they had a very happy time. My friend was a good-looking fellow—far from realizing the popular idea of a brigand—though he made a capital gendarme, as my picture would have proved if an unexpected event had not put a stop to his career as a model, and very nearly to his life.

Whilst my picture of him was in progress, he heard of the retirement of some of his friends from

the mountains, and their successful retreat to Paris, from whence came a warm invitation to join them for a few days.

"My expenses to be paid, you know, sir. The young Marquis Napolini, a great friend of mine, was one of us. He's got plenty of money. Oh! that's all right."

"And how long shall you be away?" said I.

"Only two tree week."

"And you won't forget that I shall want more sittings for your face?"

"No; all right."

But matters in Paris were not all right. For, at a meeting of the brigands, a dispute took place, and the young and noble Napolini, being of a choleric nature, and unable to relish some observations of my model, seized a bottle of claret and struck my Italian full in the face with it. Some weeks were passed in hospital, that fearful nephew of his told me with a chuckle; and he also remarked that it was his opinion, from what he had heard, that his uncle would not be of use as a model any more. The young wretch was right, for, when my brigand appeared after his return, I certainly should not have recognised in the battered individual before me the jovial fellow who went to Paris with such a light heart. The handsome nose that I had modelled so carefully was almost gone, and the face was otherwise frightfully scarred and disfigured, so I was reluctantly obliged to seek another model for my gendarme.

Whether it was that I again tried to do too much —for I find I exhibited four other pictures (besides painting small matters) in the Exhibition of 1874— or from some cause or other, the "Procession" proved far less successful than I expected.

Though I cannot agree with Dr. Johnson that Richardson is a greater writer than Fielding, I am a great admirer and constant reader of his works, and had always a desire to try my hand on a picture of "Pamela," if I should ever find in a model anything approaching the beauty that is suggested by the great author of her letters. What was my surprise and delight when, on visiting an artist, my old friend Maw Egley, I saw in his studio a pretty creature who might have been "Pamela" herself! My friend was painting a picture of the girl, and, in reply to my inquiry if she was a "regular model," I was told that perhaps she might be induced to sit for me, but that she had no intention of following the trade of model.

She came to me, and I painted a picture of "Pamela" in the act of writing one of her home-letters. She was, and is, a sweet creature; and, though now married and blessed with some small "Pamelas," she retains much of her beauty.

The charms of my model tempted me to paint two more pictures from her—one of which was called "Wandering Thoughts;" the other, "Sleep."

These pictures were all the size of life; and I contributed yet another life-size work: a girl at her devotions, which I christened "Prayer."

"Pamela" was by far the best and most popular of the series; indeed, it was, and I fear always will be, the best "single-figure picture" I have done.

In speaking of my principal work of the year 1874, I wish to record the kind assistance I received from Cardinal—then Archbishop—Manning. The subject was one of great interest to that eminent person; and I am indebted to him for the vestments, robes, mitres, etc., indispensable for the production of the picture.

By the laws of the Royal Academy all members are entitled to send eight pictures to any of the annual exhibitions. This privilege (of which I trust we shall soon deprive ourselves) is not often claimed, and, whenever it is exacted, the result is nearly always as unfortunate for the artist as it is for the public, for it requires the genius of a Reynolds or a Gainsborough to produce eight works in one year that shall be, one and all, worthy of public scrutiny. I am an example of the truth of what I say, for in the year 1875 I, for the first and I hope the last time in my life, exhibited eight works. And those worthy of being seen might certainly have been counted on the fingers of one hand—indeed, I am not sure that there would not have been a finger or two to spare even then. A very elaborate and careful little picture of "Tom Jones" showing "Sophia" her own image in the glass as a pledge of his future constancy, was creditable enough, and one or two of the rest—all half-length, life-sized pictures

—may have been what is called "up to the mark;" but I cannot say as much for the others, which showed marks of such haste and incompleteness as should never be allowed to appear in any work intended for public exhibition. Quality, and not quantity, should be the guide of the Academic contributors to the Exhibition, as well as of those who have the selection of the works of outsiders.

CHAPTER III.

THE PIOUS MODEL.

AMONGST the ignorant—and how large that class is as regards matters of art it would be impossible to calculate—the idea commonly prevails that pictures are evolved out of the painter's inner consciousness, or, in other words, are created out of nothing. The fact that nature is constantly referred to, that for the most trifling detail the artist never trusts to his memory, that he not only uses models for the human beings which may fill his compositions, but that he seeks far and wide for the smallest object to be represented, will be a revelation to most people. That being so, the model becomes a most important factor, either as a human being or a detail, to all painters; and the difficulty of discovering the needful type becomes sometimes almost impossible.

If I may presume to be known as an artist, it is as the painter of large compositions, such as the "Derby Day," the "Railway Station," "Ramsgate Sands," etc., etc., and it has been my fate to undergo much tribulation in my search after material in various forms. During the execution of the picture

of "Ramsgate Sands," after much search I found an individual exactly suited to my purpose. My servant announced a visitor:

"A person of the name of Bredman has called."

"Is he a model?"

"I think so."

"Good-looking?"

"No, sir."

"Show him in."

Mr. Bredman was a man of about thirty, dressed in a fustian jacket and trousers much the worse for wear; a somewhat heavy countenance with strongly marked character; a serious, indeed solemn, expression—in fact, the exact type I had sought for. I engaged him immediately, and, though he had never sat before, I found him an attentive and excellent sitter.

It is obvious that an artist must talk to his models if he expects to rouse the expression necessary for his work, and it is also obvious that conversation becomes difficult or easy according to the intelligence of the model. I found Bredman far above the average of the ordinary model. He had read most of the books with which I was familiar, and with one Book, the most important of all, he showed more acquaintance, I am sorry to confess, than I enjoyed myself: indeed, he surprised me by producing a Testament, in which he seemed absorbed during the necessary intervals of rest. On one occasion, I remember, when my wife brought one of our children into the studio, Bredman's solemn face brightened

pleasantly as he took the child on to his, not very satisfactory, fustian knee.

"You seem fond of children," said my wife.

"Well, mum, I should hope so," said Bredman. "Haven't we got an example here?" tapping the Testament.

"Are you married? Have your any of your own?"

"I am married, mum, but have no children *yet.*"

The peculiar accent on the word "yet" impressed me, and in the course of our work I asked my serious friend if he had hope in the happy direction of a family.

"Well, yes, sir, please God, before very long."

Bredman sat to me many times, and though, as I said before, he was familiar with many subjects, his thoughts evidently dwelt most on the most serious of all; and I found that he was convinced that he was in what he called "a state of grace"—that he was one of the elect, in fact. His conversion took place on a certain day in June at a chapel in Tottenham Court Road; at a special instant of time his sins were forgiven; from that time forward he was secure, his celestial condition was sin-proof.

"And I only wish, sir, you was in the happy frame of mind as I have felt in ever since."

Bredman's affection for his wife seemed very strong. He took much pleasure in telling me, in reply to my inquiries after her, that "It couldn't be very far off;" and the tears often came into his eyes, and on more than one occasion rolled down

his cheeks, when he drew affecting pictures of the danger and suffering that might be in store for her. My model lived somewhere in Southwark, and on a tempestuous night in December he rang my door-bell. It was late; my servants had gone to bed, and I was about to follow, when the bell stopped me. On opening the door, I found Bredman drenched with rain, and in a terrible state of mind. The event had taken place unexpectedly; no preparation, or scarcely any, had been made; no baby-clothes. "No nothing hardly," said the weeping man. "Would Mrs. Frith look him out something?" The doctor said the poor thing must have "strengthening things, port wine," etc., and he had no means. I aroused my wife, and Bredman left with a bundle of small habiliments, port wine not being forgotten. Our sittings continued, and each morning I anxiously inquired after the wife and child.

"The doctor is very kind, sir, very attentive. He says she'll pull through, he thinks; but she is very bad, and he don't know if the child will live. Oh! if only *she* is saved, how truly thankful I shall be!"

I had recommended the man as a model to several of my brother artists, amongst the rest to my old friend Mr. Egg, R.A.

About a fortnight after Mrs. Bredman's confinement I met Mr. Egg, who had received a call from Bredman, and an appeal for assistance in similar terms to those he had made to me. Egg was a bachelor, so baby-clothes were impossible; but money and wine were supplied abundantly.

A month elapsed, during which I had varying accounts of Mrs. Bredman's condition from her husband. More port wine, and a promise—which did not seem enthusiastically received—that Mrs. Frith would go to Southwark as soon as his wife was well enough to see her.

"It's such a poor place, you know, sir, for a lady to come to; and the poor thing is so weak and nervous, the doctor says it wouldn't do—not yet."

I think six weeks had passed since Bredman had been made a happy father, when a friend of mine, a Mr. Bassett, who had frequently seen Bredman sitting to me, called to tell me that he had just received a visit from my model, in great distress at the premature confinement of his wife—there were no preparations, no baby-clothes, and so on. Mr. Bassett was not provided with infant habiliments, but he was with money and port wine, both of which were gratefully carried off by my pious friend.

"Did he tell you when the event took place?" asked I.

"Yes," said Bassett, "last night between ten and eleven; and he would have come to me then if it hadn't been so late."

What a very extraordinary woman Mrs. Bredman must be! thought I. It then occurred to me that it was desirable, in the interest of myself and friends, that I should see this wonderful woman. Accordingly I lost no time in wending my way to Southwark. I easily found Mr. Bredman's lodging, which, as

he said, was but a poor place. There was a perpendicular row of bell-handles, and I pulled one after another, till I found the door answered by a respectable-looking woman.

"Does Mr. Bredman live here?"

"Yes, sir; but he is not at home: he has been out all day."

"Is Mrs. Bredman in?"

"Who, sir?"

"Mrs. Bredman."

"He ain't married; there ain't no Mrs. Bredman. He has lodged here two years and a half, and I am quite sure he is not married. Why, he is that cheerful and steady; always in, and reading of an evening, when he ain't playing with my children, and they are that fond of him!"

"Oh," said I, "I thank you; I wish you good-evening."

It happened that my regenerated friend was engaged to sit for me the morning after my journey to Southwark, and it certainly seemed strange that his landlady had said nothing to him about the inquirer after Mrs. Bredman; that such was the case was evident by the placid unconcern with which my model fell into the attitude in which he may be seen in "Ramsgate Sands," where he is depicted offering a "Tombola" for sale to an old woman who will none of it.

"Well, Bredman, how's the wife?"

"I think she'll pull through, now, sir. She felt a little faint last night; I gave her some of your port

wine, and she got all right. I hope I shall always remember you and Mrs. Frith, and all your kindness."

"Did you taste it yourself, Bredman?"

"Well, I won't deceive you, sir; she made me take just a drop, and it was that good!"

"And the baby—by the way, is it a boy or girl?"

"A boy, sir. He rather squints just now, and he is a little yellow, but the doctor says those things will mend themselves."

"Doesn't kneeling like that tire you very much? Just rest awhile."

"Thank you, sir," and the Testament was produced as usual.

"Put that book away, Bredman; I don't like to see you handling it just now."

"Ah, sir, if only you would——"

"Bredman, do you know what the punishment is for those who obtain money by false pretences?"

"No, sir."

"Well, then, you are very likely to know. You have no wife and no child; you have obtained clothes and money from me, from Mr. Egg, Mr. Bassett, and probably from others, and you richly deserve—— Now, what have you got to say for yourself?"

In an instant the man was sobbing, the tears pouring down his face. He evidently couldn't speak for some moments. He then looked up with an expression on his face quite new to me, and he said:

"I am an infernal rogue, ain't I?"

"You are," said I. "Now get out of my room, and never let me see your face again!"

The man's character became too well known in the profession for the calling of model to be any longer possible for him, and strange as it may appear, though his career as a hypocritical knave was well known to us, a sufficient sum was subscribed by artists to enable him to go to Australia. He found his way to the diggings, which were in full swing at that time; and I received a grateful letter from him, still in my possession, in which he informed me he was prospering, and he hoped helping the good cause by the sale of religious works in a store at Ballarat.

CHAPTER IV.

VISIT TO ITALY.

In the early days of the study of art in this country it was thought so necessary for the student to go to Italy, where the finest pictures were supposed to be plentiful and easy of access, that special advantages were offered to those who had gained gold medals in the Royal Academy to enable students with slender purses to spend two years abroad. In those days we had no National Gallery, and, no doubt, Italy contained treasures which have since found their way to this country. However that may be, a visit that I paid to Italy—in the year at which these reminiscences have arrived—convinced me that, with the exception of Florence, the student will seek in vain for works of the Old Masters to be compared for a moment with those of our own in the National Gallery.

We are students to the end of our days, but it is not in our juvenescent period that we can appreciate the works of Raphael and Michael Angelo. Those giants put forth their full strength in Rome, and, if that city be visited at all, it should be at a time when

the mind's eyes have been opened by long study and experience. As a proof of this, it may be remembered that even so great a genius as Reynolds—who saw the Sistine Chapel and the frescoes in the Vatican when he was but a tyro—confesses to his disappointment and wonder at the reputation of Michael Angelo; though he lived to be thankful that he could fully appreciate that great man, of which he gave a touching proof in the last of his lectures to the students at the Royal Academy, the closing word of which was the name of Michael Angelo.

Some letters written by me during my visit to Italy have been preserved, and I propose to quote largely from them, as they will be found, amongst other—I trust amusing—descriptive matter, to contain opinions on art carefully formed, and still unaltered.

My wife and two daughters accompanied me, and we put ourselves in the care of the best of couriers. Our route lay through Paris to Marseilles, from whence I write:

"Marseilles is a wonderful place. We seemed to have arrived at the blue sky and heat of Italy. The Mediterranean so blue—but not so blue as it is always painted—and on the shores of it every conceivable type of human being except the English: I saw not one yesterday. Such fellows! Greeks, Turks, Spaniards—in fact, types of every nation under the sun. And then, the Marseilles women, though seldom pretty, and with no special costume to mark them, are full of character. I saw the flower-girls

that A—— talks of, but there is nothing—except that they sit in a kind of nest under an awning, which is picturesque enough—to distinguish them from other flower-girls; and there was not a pretty one amongst them. This place is a second Paris on a small scale. Splendid streets, boulevards with arcades of linden-trees—the shade from which will be required in summer — incessant jingling of horse-bells, peculiar cries and still more peculiar smells. . . . ."

"Nice, April 6.

"We left Marseilles on Sunday afternoon, and passed through some lovely country to reach this place. Whether it was that my fellow-travellers were over-fatigued (one being quite ill) to take interest in it, I can't tell; but I could get only a languid look up from Miss Braddon or Wilkie Collins when I appealed to them to admire the mountains of Savoy, whose snowy tops were just receiving the last rays of the setting sun—wonderfully like the best scenery of an opera! There are those pine-trees that grow to a good height and then terminate in a round, black, bushy top—so often reproduced by Turner and others. And the rocks and hills in the uncertain, silvery, misty light of evening looking so like what in theatrical phrase are termed flats, as if, at a whistle of a man at the wings, they could be slid along.

"We arrived at Nice just as evening changed into night, and were deposited at a charming hotel facing the Mediterranean, with geraniums in full bloom,

and palms and cacti growing in profusion from the front down to the sea. I stepped from the window on to a broad marble balcony—the sky so clear and pure, the stars seeming brighter and nearer than at home, to a degree that our distance from England did not seem to account for. The night was most lovely, and, though there was no moon, I fancied I could see miles over the sea. Just as I was turning to go back to the dining-room, a clear ringing voice from below struck up the hymn to the Virgin. How perfectly the music seemed in harmony with the scene! Only a strongish flight of poetic fancy was required to induce one to believe that the lovely tones of the 'Ave Maria' reached the stars that seemed so near.

"'It is a blind Italian woman, sir,' said the waiter. 'She always comes on Sundays to sing the Evening Hymn. Dinner is ready.'

"Fancy waking next morning and finding the beautiful bay as foggy as London, a pelting rain falling, and the sky—when you could see it—as unpromising as it could well be. For the present, getting out was out of the question. In the afternoon the weather cleared a little, and we drove through Nice and on to the hills that envelop and environ it, from the top of which you take in the whole panorama of Nice, with the two horns of its crescent form stretching far out into the Mediterranean. Villas of every possible and impossible form nestled amongst pine and olive trees, castellated whims of idiotic Englishmen, Gambart's

marble palace, magnificent hotels, and long rows of houses and shops—not so very unlike Eastbourne—make up the brick and mortar of the scene, and have done their best, or their worst, to spoil the glorious handiwork of Nature."

"April 7.

"Yesterday we went to Monaco, where I saw Homburg in little, *Rouge et Noir* on its last legs—black legs—a very languid affair compared to what I remember it in Germany; the rooms small and tawdry compared with the Salon d'Or. But Monaco, with its delicious gardens overhanging the sea, lovely beyond description! The place is heaven, with a hell in the midst of it. As to his Altitude the Prince of that little country, he had best make hay while the sun shines, for the time will soon come when the gates of his infernal region will be closed and the devils shut up. The existence of this monarch, with his little kingdom and his little army—the whole affair a kind of doll's house! The capital is perched on a lovely hill; the streets being but narrow passages, many of them impassable for carriages, and in none could one carriage pass another. And then the wee soldiers—tawdry with blue and gold, with their little cocked-hats done up in oilskin, marching about like bantams and keeping sentry over nothing at all—are supremely ridiculous, and would be passed with a shrug and a smile if they did not assist to keep up what is a scandal to Europe. Bismarck is wanted.

"We dined at the hotel at Monte Carlo, wolfish

women sitting opposite to us, whose gambling we had watched, and whose hunger was as ravenous as their way of satisfying it was revolting. As we left the place at eight o'clock, on our return to Nice, trains were depositing scores of gamblers whose eager rush to the room was awful to see. I must not quit Nice without an effort to give you an idea of the house in which my old friend Gambart is passing, if not the evening, the afternoon of a prosperous life. You must try to figure for yourself the kind of place described in the 'Lady of Lyons'—'a palace lifting to eternal summer its marble walls from out of groves' of so and so 'musical with birds'—you will arrive at an idea of Gambart's place, barring the birds. It is a long two-storied building of purest white marble, with statues on the top relieved against the sky; exquisite in proportion and in taste, outside and in. The rooms, lofty and light, filled, but not overcrowded, with pictures, sculptures, china; and the rest of it. We had luncheon in harmony with the surroundings, rare Venetian glass, pretty to look at, but awkward to drink from; though what was in the glass was as rare as the glass itself. Baron Gudin, the marine painter, was there; he gave me a very high-flown and eulogistic reception, and showed unmistakable symptoms of an intention of kissing me. I am glad he didn't proceed to that dreadful extremity, for I must have submitted. Neither my pen nor my pencil could do justice to Gambart's palace. He has groves of olive-trees, miles of palm-walks (the estate is called Les Palmiers), masses of orange-

trees—the fruit of which, ripe in April, is, to my taste, inferior to the two-a-penny oranges in London—and every variety of flowers in almost tropical luxuriance. 'These were in their full beauty in January,' he says, 'but are now going off a little.' Think of that state of things in Nice, and London in January! Here, high above the sea, and from a terrace at the bottom of the garden, you get a view of the bay and the whole of Nice such as, I imagine, the whole world cannot surpass. To-day we take the famous drive along the Cornice Road to St. Remo, and to-morrow to Genoa."

"Genoa, April 10.

"We left Nice on Wednesday, and arrived at St. Remo, our first Italian stopping-place, in the evening, after the most wonderful drive in the world along the famous Cornice Road—no pen nor tongue can give an idea of the beauty of it. After leaving Nice, we were nearly two hours ascending the mountains, a high stone wall to the right of us, and to the left mountain after mountain, now close upon us, then rearing themselves in shadowy distance; valley after valley, sometimes on our level, sometimes far down below. Now the road wound round the summit of a hill, with only a low parapet to protect you from a precipice a thousand feet deep. Then you turned suddenly, and found the blue Mediterranean to vary the scene. What effects of light and shadow on the landscape! the scattered houses looking like toys so far below, then mile

after mile of olive-trees and wonderful Eastern-looking patches of date and palm trees. It was a scene to be remembered—and what a feeble idea I have given you of it!

"We stopped to rest at Mentone—a close, stifling place, much favoured by invalids. I think the finest view of all was from the hill, after leaving Mentone, on the top of which is the Italian Custom House. Never can I forget the look back. Mentone stretches far into the sea at the base of a mountain of magnificent form; this is repeated by still grander mountain-shapes, piled one upon another till they are lost in distance. Some were snow-topped, and the summits of others seemed suspended in air, from the effect of clouds which lay in misty volume across them. The sun now and again lightened up distant valleys, or glinted for a moment across the mountain-sides. The day was slightly cloudy, and very favourable for seeing variety of effect; and I fully appreciated it. We stayed the night at St. Remo—a lovely spot—and then started for Genoa on a tedious, but grand, journey by rail along the sea to this city of palaces, where we arrived in the evening."

"Pisa, April 12.

"We only stayed one night in Genoa—a place full of interest, and the first at which I found fine pictures — only a few of them, but those few how splendid! The Via Nuova and Nuovissima are composed of the palaces of the old and modern nobility—very few of the former are left. The

palaces where the Dorias, the Balbis, and the Spinolas lived and plotted are cafés or photographic establishments. So, instead of love-murmurs, or the interchange of a look or a rapid word that devoted a rival to perdition, you have the rattle of billiard-balls and the smell of collodion. The streets are so narrow between these palaces that two carriages can barely pass. There is no foot-pavement, and how people are not frequently run over amazes me; but the high doorways and the massive doors! and the courtyards, inner court after inner court, till you arrive at marble staircases guarded by marble animals, intended, probably, for lions—bigger than any real lions in the world. And when you are at the top of the stairs—and 'such a getting upstairs' it is—you find yourself in rooms with decorations unlike anything you ever saw; and here and there pictures by Vandyke, painted by that young gentleman when he was a guest, perhaps in the very rooms in which you stand, and placed by him on the walls, in the frames in which you find them. What would those splendid swells—who look as if they were born to command the world—say if they could see the uses to which their homes have come at last? Most of the Genoese Vandykes have been sold and removed; but in the Pallavacini Palace there are several as fine, or finer, than any I have seen, together with Italian and Spanish pictures of great beauty. The Academy of Arts, in which two or three melancholy students were drawing, was a dismal business. The place was filled with bad pictures of the modern Italian school.

"We were taken through all the schools. In the life-school there was the stuffy, hot feeling I know so well—indeed, except that the room is much smaller than that at Burlington House, I could have fancied myself there.

"The churches are, of course, splendid in Genoa and everywhere else, but those we have seen up to the present writing have contained no noteworthy pictures; and, as their other attractions were no attractions to me, I confess I was as anxious to avoid them—partly on account of the risk of cold to my party—as our courier was determined I should not miss one if he could help it. Many fights we had on the church question, but I was nearly always conqueror.

"We intended to have driven round Genoa the morning we left, but the rain was incessant; and for the last few days we have had fires, and I have been glad of a great-coat. I therefore know nothing of the splendour of the bay, about which I have heard so much, except what I saw of it as we came in by rail. The railway journeys are lovely, so far—that from Genoa to Pisa surpassing everything. The Gulf of Spezzia where Shelley was drowned, the Carrara marble mountains, and the whole route, form a variety of pictures never to be forgotten. We saw the leaning tower of Pisa and the group of buildings near it, in the evening light, but reached Pisa too late to visit them till yesterday morning. I wish I could give you an idea of the old-world look of the things. They stand together—the cathedral,

the tower, and the Campo Santo—alone, silent, but how eloquent! I have never before seen any building that conveyed to me so complete a sense of what may be called the 'atmosphere of dead centuries' that seemed to encompass them—grave and dignified, without the least thing in common with the present time."

"Rome, April 14

"We arrived here at seven to-night; and all I have seen of Rome was in a drive through some streets which are exactly like those of any second-rate French town—the same jingling of horse-bells, the same tall houses with green window-shutters, more French than Italian names on the shops—in fact, French all over. I could see the Pincian Hill from my window at the Hôtel Russie if it were not too dark—so says the landlord, who looks and talks like an English duke.

"One of the most charming places we have yet seen is Pisa. The Arno, a muddy, yellow stream, runs through it, and our hotel was on the bank. On looking out of window, on the night of our arrival, we saw a quaint line of Italian buildings, consisting of churches, palaces, tall campanili—a beautifully broken, irregular architectural line, relieved darkly against a glorious evening sky. An oddly-shaped angular house was one of these, and, on inquiry next day as we drove past it, I was informed it was the Palazzo Ugolino.

"'And there, sir,' said the driver, 'is the Count.'

"Everyone knows Reynolds's 'Ugolino,' that grim old man, sitting hungry — or perhaps past hunger—waiting for death, with his children about him, in the Torre de Fame at Pisa. I turned round and had a good look at the lineal descendant of the starved old Count, and beheld a small, good-looking dandy, with a little black moustache, smoking a long, thin Italian cigar; his cloak thrown over his shoulder in the assassin fashion common in these parts, and walking as the Italian youth is prone to move, like a theatrical supernumerary who has either just committed a murder behind the scenes or is on his way to do it.

"There is nothing in the way of pictures at Pisa. Those at the Campo Santo, though interesting, could never have been fine frescoes, and are now all but destroyed.

"The next evening found us at Siena, after a railway journey passing as usual through fine scenery, if we could have seen it; but there was a continuous downpour, causing mists which obscured our views with provoking pertinacity. But, from glimpses of mountain and valley, I have no doubt a fine day would have revealed great beauties. Of all the filthy places to stop at—how much more to live in—commend me to Siena. Never can I forget the drive through those narrow, sloppy streets, the tall, black houses overhanging and choking one, through street after street, till we stopped at a dark, low-roofed entry and were told we had arrived at our inn. Great heaven! What a place to stop at! We

walked up the wet, dirty, uneven flagstones, escorted by a little brigand-like landlord, to a cavernous staircase, so dark that it required a dull oil-lamp even in daylight to direct the feet of us miserable guests up a honeycombed marble staircase till we reached a great, rambling, dirty sitting-room, with chairs so hard that it was a positive relief to stand. And the bedrooms—oh, the bedrooms!—mine looked as if forty murders had been committed in it. Our dismayed faces, after the comforts of Pisa, may be imagined. 'We won't stop! Nothing should induce us!' and so on. But we soon found Siena was our master, for the other inns were, if possible, worse; and, what was worst of all, we could not leave for Rome till Wednesday, for the train left at ten in the morning, and it was now seven at night—and 'there is so much to see in Siena, signor.' So we eat our dirty dinner, waited upon by the dirtiest waiter eyes ever beheld, and went to bed on straw mattresses, which made a horrible noise when we moved. I was awoke at two in the morning by a series of hollow groans coming from the room next to mine, like the last signs of life in a man being murdered. I sat up in bed and simply said to myself, 'That is a queer noise!' when it was repeated with additions and improvements. I soon became awake to the fact, which was that my neighbour had a bad attack of nightmare; and I don't know which disturbance was the worst, the nightmare or the finale to 'Lucia,' to which he treated me as I was dressing in the morning. After a dirty breakfast, served by

the dirty waiter, we sallied forth to the cathedral, which repaid us to some extent for the discomfort we had endured. It is truly magnificent, with its wealth of ornament, its lovely inlaid marbles and mosaics. It is built of black and white marble in alternate layers, so the effect of the columns is something like a lady's black-and-white-barred stocking, not altogether pleasing to my eye.

"The school of painting in Siena was one of the most famous in Italy. In the Academy there was a large collection of what Flatow called 'the Chamber-of-Horror pattern,' not half so good as ours in the National Gallery, and some of it with little more pretension to be classed as real art than that of Japan or China. But in one of the churches there is an exquisite Crucifixion by Perugino, Raffaelle's master; and the library of the cathedral is decorated with frescoes by Pintoricchio, a friend and fellow-pupil of Raphael's. These are wonderful works, and for the first time in my life I felt the full beauty of fresco: this sensation to be strengthened and confirmed to its utmost extent by what I saw by Raphael in Rome. There are no doubt some very picturesque buildings in Siena, notably the town-hall in the great piazza, with its thin, tall tower, and lots of churches filled with wretched pictures; but he who misses Siena will not miss much besides dirt and discomfort. How glad I was to find myself spinning along through exquisite scenery on the brightest of bright mornings, leaving Siena behind, and having Rome in front! Never to my last day

shall I forget the first sight of Rome, or rather of the dome of St. Peter's on the horizon, marking the place of the Eternal City."

"Rome, April 18, 1875.

"My head is in such confusion from all I have seen in Rome, that I shall find it difficult to convey to you any of the wonders of the place. Modern Rome is a huge French town, less Italian than Pisa or Siena a great deal. But ancient Rome, or rather the ruins of it—what can I say of them that has not been much better said already? It is impossible to give a notion of the sensations that take possession of you on the first sight of the Forum, with its triumphal arch and its time-mouldered columns, the Via Sacra running through it, paved with the very slabs of rough stone, unlike in shape and colour to anything in the world, over which poured the thousands thronging to the bloody shows at the Coliseum!

"It must be a dull imagination indeed that does not repair the broken seats, replace the enormous awning, and see the row upon row of passionate eyes watching the struggle of the gladiators, or enjoying with brutal pleasure the sufferings of the Christians. Certainly if the Christians suffered eighteen hundred years ago, they have much the best of it now; for instead of worshipping in secret catacombs, they are now housed in such 'poems in stone' as prove, in their absolute perfection, the hopelessness of rivalry, and go far to reconcile us (in the impossibility

of excelling these works of the mighty dead) to the constant reproduction of them by modern architects.

"I think I may safely assert that there are more bad pictures in Rome than in any city in the world. The good pictures may be counted on your ten fingers, always excepting the works of Raphael and Michael Angelo; indeed, I doubt if I have seen ten; though I have visited so many palaces inhabited by the descendants of the Colonnas, Dorias, Farnesi, Cenci, and the rest of them; but then the ten are magnificent. In one palace, the Farnesina, there is a gallery filled with Raphael's frescoes; in another the 'Sacred and Profane Love,' by Titian, perhaps the finest picture in the world; a splendid portrait of a villainous-looking pope, by Velasquez; a 'Danae,' by Correggio, his best work out of Parma; and a few works of the Italian school.

"We went yesterday to a monastery to see a lot of mouldering remains of lamps, spoons, broken armour, etc., said to be contemporary with the Cæsars; the ruins of whose palace still exist in huge ugly masses round which the east wind blew with an icy sharpness in April, unsurpassable on a winter's day in the Highlands. I think I have seen more villainous faces in Rome than I ever saw before; both in men and women—the former look as if they would gladly cut your throat for sixpence, and the latter as if they would assist in the operation. The graves of Keats and Shelley, which we saw yesterday, are tenderly cared for.

"I had two delightful hours this afternoon alone

with Michael Angelo and Raphael, in the Sistine Chapel and the Vatican. I left the place fully persuaded that the two men were superhuman, unrivalled, and for ever unapproachable. The study of their works ends in the conviction that the painters implicitly believed in the divine truth of the themes they illustrated—nothing else, notwithstanding their God-gifted genius, could have inspired them; and difficult as it is to believe that Raphael really took it for granted that saints, armed with long swords, appeared in the sky at a moment when fortune was going against one of the popes in battle, and so turned the tables on his enemies, I think the assumption must be allowed."

"Naples, April 23.

"We left Rome on Wednesday, and at a distance of at least fifty miles from Naples, Vesuvius loomed upon us; more gigantic, and in all ways grander, than we expected. The smoke from the cone looked at first like a little white cloud resting on the summit; but a nearer approach showed us its movability, and we very soon could distinguish the volumes of smoke as they ascended into the evening air, and then moved away in cloud-like forms.

"As we drove through Naples from the station, I felt the keenest disappointment. There is an Italian proverb, 'See Naples, and then die'—of the smells, I should add; for of all the dirty places and dirty people I ever saw, the like of those we passed through on our way to the hotel surpassed

all previous experience. But at last we turned towards the bay, and then the glorious sight that met my eyes was ample compensation. Something like Nice, Naples forms a huge crescent, backed up by hills of every shape and colour; with Vesuvius looking like a king amongst his vassals as he towers above the rest. Every variety of colour—pearly-gray, golden-brown, and the tenderest negative green—mixing together in the evening light, pervaded the mountains; and they seemed almost upon you in the pellucid air. But oh! the dirty, colourless, unpicturesque brutes that made the living element in this magic scene! I had imagined the lazzaroni of Naples with red caps, faded velvet jackets of every shade of colour, naked legs and thighs, mending nets, chatting to dark-eyed beauties, and so on; instead of which they are drabby, shabby, dirty creatures, ugly and revolting in every way. Parts of Naples, away from the fashionable quarter, strongly remind one of the worst parts of Ramsgate, Folkestone, or Hastings. You might fancy yourself at either of those places; and this in front of that eternally lovely bay! If the creatures lived at Houndsditch, we might have fancied that their surroundings had demoralized them; but they never seem to look at anything but one another's heads, or into the filthy messes they are eating.

"The museum at Naples contains some of the finest sculpture in the world, to say nothing of the Pompeian relics, more interesting, perhaps, to the casual observer.

"On Friday we spent the day at Herculaneum and Pompeii. It was a long drive through Portici, and not a pretty one—filth and beggars all the way. We stopped at an inn to order luncheon; and whilst it was preparing we drove to the Pompeian Amphitheatre, which stands alone at present, on the outskirts of what was Pompeii—the greater part of which is still buried under volcanic ashes. And there stands the arena—not circular as I had fancied, but elliptical—most of the stone seats still standing one above another in long tiers. The dens of the animals, the waiting-room of the gladiators, might have been occupied yesterday! To a reader of Bulwer, how specially interesting!—the empty look of the place so often filled by eager thousands; the awful contrast between the stillness now, and the mingled roars of beasts, and men worse than beasts, that rose into the great sky thousands of years ago! Then there are the very seats, in the best part larger and more commodious, in which the aristocracy sat. Separate boxes for the ladies at the top (the women never sat with the men) were broken and grass-grown, but all so nearly complete, that a very little would restore the amphitheatre to its original condition. As we drove to it we passed on the side of the road what appeared to me a cluster of mud-hovels; very small, dirty, and drabby, roofless and miserable, without a vestige of colour, or column, or statue; and a modern shed with new red tiles here and there, put apparently to protect something. I looked. I heard the courier, whom everybody

here treats with great respect and calls Signor Corriere, say: 'Dere you haf Pompeii, sir!' 'Well, of all the *sells* in the world!' we all exclaimed; and very foolish we were to be so rashly guided by first impressions, for the roofless, colourless place that Pompeii certainly seems at a distance, resolved itself, on nearer approach, into the most wonderful little city in the world; but it seems built for pigmies. The streets are eleven feet wide at their widest; the houses were never more than one story high, and they were all built on the same plan; but the frescoes and other decorations are very varied and beautiful.

"Our guide through the ruins was a Neapolitan soldier; and what with his comical French, and his still more comical manners, he kept us highly amused. He seemed to think what he had to describe ought to interest us as much as if he were showing the gates of heaven; and the way in which he said in English (the only words he could speak in that language) 'by-and-by, sare, by-and-by,' when we attempted to anticipate his narrative, was indescribable. He called me 'Mosseu' at every word, and was altogether inimitable in look, manners, and everything. I was surprised to find that not more than a third of the little city is uncovered; and the excavations are now going on with great vigour. Discoveries of deep interest are made every day; and as we wandered about we could see the workmen as busy as bees pickaxing away the lava and ashes, like a lot of English navvies. A friend of our conductor's said

something to him that made him start; and he left us, only to return running and gesticulating like a madman. 'Mosseu, on a trouvay oone cadavre.' The deuce they have, thought I; that will be something to see. Fancy the thrilling interest with which I approached the excavations, and saw the men kneeling and carefully picking away the volcanic matter from the body of a woman so perfect that you could not only distinguish the sex, but you felt sure she had been beautiful! Anything more pathetic could not be conceived—a young mother with little children huddled about her; one hand covered her face, and with the other she had tried to protect a child from the pitiless shower of sulphurous ashes and boiling water that overwhelmed them in that awful time. She conveyed to me, as she lay there, the struggle she had made to escape, through darkness so dense—according to Pliny, who was in it—that people could not see each other, though they might be touching; and at last in despair had thrown herself down to die, and be concealed under the fatal ashes for eighteen centuries; then to be uncovered before the eyes of the present writer. I only saw the upper part of the body down to a little below the waist brought to light, the excavators telling us they were obliged to be so tender with their work that it might be many hours before the whole figure was revealed.

"Herculaneum is very like Pompeii, but the extent excavated is much smaller. Instead of the shower of ashes that overwhelmed Pompeii, lava, in some places

thirty feet thick, had been poured upon Herculaneum; forming a surface hard as flint. The difficulty of removing such an obstruction may be imagined.

"The wonderful freshness of the Pompeian houses, as they are laid open to the light of day, is astonishing; and the things they find! On a plate were some walnuts, some cracked and opened, some whole; a bunch of grapes; three or four olives in a dish, one cut in half, and the knife lying by. As to the frescoes and inscriptions, they look as if they had just been executed.

"I must now take leave of Pompeii and return to Naples, from whence we took a drive along the bay to Baiæ, where we had an *al-fresco* lunch that was delightful. We drove up to an Italian inn—albergo, they call it—which has been uncommonly well imitated on the stage. We were conducted up some stairs, outside the house, to a terrace overlooking the sea, with the island of Capri in the distance. The landlord and landlady bustled about, just as they do at a theatre. I felt I was acting a part, and had only come on to the terrace from the side scenes.

"'What can we have to eat?'

"'Well, signor' (that's to myself), 'we can give you oysters from Lago—' something or other, to which he pointed—'or these fishes, noble sir, which were alive an hour ago.'

"'Serve the banquet,' said I to the corriere, who was interpreter, of course; and anything more enjoyable never was enjoyed.

"The landlord's eyes glistened, and his earrings

twinkled with delight at our praises of his food, above all of the wine of his own growing.

"'Let the signor observe it is too early yet; if he will come later he will find the veranda, covering the terrace where he sits, a mass of grapes.'

"The signor leans over the balcony smoking. The landlord desires to know if the noble Englishman would like them to dance the Tarantella. 'Yes, that is what he would like.' So from some depth below come up two girls—helpers or servants of the inn, perhaps—with naked feet; and such dresses! about as unlike the stage as possible—very dirty, but such colour! We could hear the rattle of the castanets as the dancers came upstairs, followed by the jolly landlady, who carried a huge tambourine. They set to work at once; they twisted, they wriggled, they poussetted opposite each other, swinging round and round; the castanets constantly crackling and keeping time to the tambourine. It was delightful to watch the supple, stayless figures performing the national dance as if they enjoyed it to the full. When the performers were thoroughly out of breath, we stopped them with some money, and took our leave of Baiæ and them.

"We returned to Rome from Naples, and from thence we went to Florence, *viâ* Perugia. The latter is a delicious place, thoroughly Italian, without Italian disagreeables. It is a very old city, wonderfully picturesque; with its quaint, time-worn buildings crowning one of the Umbrian hills, and overlooking the lovely valley, or rather valleys, of the Tiber. Of

the view from my window I despair of giving you an idea, so utterly unlike is it to anything you could see in England, or, indeed, anywhere but in Italy. Perhaps if you can fancy the view from Richmond Hill, magnified and repeated a thousand times, stretching for scores upon scores of miles, you may get a faint idea; but where are the eternal Apennines to close up the distance? Where is the undulating country, huge wave after wave, like a mighty sea melting away into faint aërial distance, dotted with giant yew or fir trees, and the ever-lovely olive and vine —now and again with the little cities and scattered hamlets shining in sunlight?

"That gray clump at the foot of the snow-topped mountain, which you can just make out to be a city, though it looks as if you could cover it with your handkerchief, is Assisi, where we shall go presently. From my standpoint I fancy I can trace the source of the backgrounds in the pictures of Perugino, Raphael, and the rest of the Umbrian school; indeed, the resemblance of the landscape to that in the pictures, and the people to the artists' models, is palpable. As to Messieurs Cimabue, Giotto, and even Perugino, I fear I must confess I am sick of them. There is an undoubted earnestness, begot of belief, that amounts at times to solemnity, and gives to what these men did an air of simple truth that is greatly to be admired; but it is conveyed to you through the medium of such imperfect art, such infantine attempts to produce what is shown in such perfection in later times, that what is meant to be

solemn is often ludicrous, and simplicity is pushed into tameness and insipidity; in fact, these pictures are *curiosities*, and not works of art at all in the true sense of the term.

"We drove to Assisi—such a drive!—and saw the famous church, or rather churches, for the immense pile consists of three churches built over one another; the whole covering the canonized bones of St. Francis of Assisi, the remarkable person who preached to a congregation of birds. The decorations in the upper church are entirely the work of Giotto; and though they are in a sadly perished condition, the subjects can still be traced. In one large fresco you find St. Francis—represented in his youthful days—so misconducting himself that his father thought he was mad, and seemed on the point of giving him a good thrashing for not attending to his work, when an angel appears and informs the old gentleman of the future destiny of his son. The old man, who is full of character, looks at the angel with a kind of 'Can I believe my eyes' expression; mixed with a look which conveyed to me the notion that the appearance of the supernatural figure was suspected to be a trick of Francis'—who looks an idle dog—to frighten his father. However, the stern parent's heart is softened, his hand is stayed; and Francis goes into the world and proceeds to heal sick people, and cast out the ugliest devils that were ever seen in this world or any other. Francis sees as many visions as he pleases; has the most familiar intercourse with the heavenly choir, from the prin-

cipal personages down to the smallest cherub; and finally succeeds in deluding himself, and millions of others, into absolute belief in such follies—a belief which they proceeded to prove to all the world by placing over the body of this weak-minded hysterical monk, a dream in stone, too lovely for words; every inch of it coloured and carved with a thoroughness and a beauty that nothing but *faith* could bring about; but faith in what?—a series of impostures or self-delusions, or perhaps both.

"From my youth up I had been told by the happy people fresh from Italy of the treasures in Florence. 'Until you have seen the Uffizi and the Pitti Galleries,' said my travelled friends, 'you know nothing of the powers of Raphael, Titian, and Correggio, to say nothing of the smaller masters.' My delight in finding myself in Florence may be imagined; though the hotel was so thronged that we were consigned to the third floor, my bedroom being so close to a bell-tower that I could almost touch it. Florence seems to have hundreds of such towers—seldom silent—so the chances of rest in their vicinity are remote; it was therefore after a somewhat sleepless night that I paid my first visit to the Uffizi Palace.

"In the tribune stands 'the statue that enchants the world.' I confess I am not of that world, for I think the figure affected and idealized till nature has almost left it. I had drawn from it often; and the more I knew of my art and of the Venus de' Medici, the less I thought of the latter, and the more surprised I was at its reputation: its sister Venus of Milo immeasur-

ably surpasses it in every quality. Close by the Medicean Venus hangs that of Titian. A lovely reclining figure, said to be a portrait of the mistress of one of the Dukes d'Urbino. This picture displays every charm of art in absolute perfection. The Uffizi Gallery bristles with splendid specimens of all the great masters. Raphael's Circular Madonna, with the holy Child, smiles at you as the baker's daughter smiled upon the painter; but the rapt expression of the San Sisto picture, which conveys to you the impression that the 'most blessed among women' is entirely absorbed in the consciousness of her awful destiny—is absent from the Madonna della Seggiola, who is but a lovely mother, caressing a no less lovely child. Here we have one of the few specimens of Botticelli that my feeble powers enable me to appreciate. I think I feel fully the beauties of the Uffizi picture, which equals, if it does not surpass, the three angels in our National Gallery—a work that always gives me exquisite pleasure. But this master so often disfigures his pictures by bad drawing and worse painting, and by such a revelling in ugliness—notably seen in his 'Venuses' in our collection—as to make it a matter of wonder to me how admirers can be found for them."

But I must hurry away from Florence, and again draw upon letters written at the time from my experiences of Italian travel:

"Hotel Danieli, Venice, May 11, 1875.

"Here I am in Venice—such a Venice, going in-

finitely beyond all I could have conceived of it in exquisite beauty! Instead of a cab at the station I took a gondola. Two Italians, just like organ-grinders in London, one at the prow, the other at the stern, urged the black hearse-like thing swiftly and silently along the water streets; past masses of gorgeous palaces, and marble churches, with the most exquisite tracery of delicious architectural detail that the mind of poet ever conceived. Such colour, lighted up here and there by the evening sun, and such associations connected with every place!

"'What bridge is that?'

"'The Rialto.'

"'And the smaller one, under which we have just passed?'

"'That, signor, is the Ponte dei Sospiri.'

"I had scarcely time to note the Doge's Palace on the one side, and the awful prison, with its rusted, clamped, trebly-barred, niched windows on the other, before we were out into the wide lagoon; and seeming to float in the glorious light, was the Church of the Salute with its attendant lovely surroundings."

"May 13.

"The Princess of Prussia is in this hotel, and the Venetians improvised a water fête on the Grand Canal in honour of the Royal visit. I did not intend to have assisted at it, but a friend who had challenged me in the picture galleries had hired a boat, and it required very little pressure to induce me to take a place in it; and we soon

found our gondola making one amongst scores of others, most of them decorated with paper lanterns of every conceivable form.

"We glided silently about, waiting for a big barge which presently appeared; a mass of light and flowers, in the midst of which was a military band and chorus-singers from the opera. We on the gondolas surrounded and followed the barge as it moved almost imperceptibly along; the music from the instruments rising up into the quiet air, thrilling and enchanting us." We paused opposite this hotel in honour of the Princess; and then the human voices, in what seemed to me delicious accord, broke in upon the night; and as the last strains from the band died away, again we moved slowly in a serried mass. The figures of the gondoliers as they bent to their work, now cutting dark against a mass of light, now lighted into brilliancy, as a blue or red light showed them up as clearly as the brightest sun. I don't exaggerate when I say that we were so jammed together that you might have walked dryshod from one side of the Grand Canal to the other; and though I constantly found the bright steel prow of a gondola close to my arm, or to my back; such was the wonderful skill of the fellows that a violent blow never struck a boat, much less a human being, the whole night through; though at times the crowding would have alarmed the timid.

"At our approach every detail of delicate tracery of some splendid palace would be artificially lighted, seeming to welcome us. The steps of the churches

blazed with blue and red fire; hundreds of faces lighted into a ruddy glow, or a ghastly blue from the whiter light; then all on shore dark again. Still we move slowly on, the music swells and echoes up the side canals; and all the while the quiet moon looks down upon us with her usual inscrutable indifference to all that goes on below. It was getting very late, so we left the procession at the Rialto, and went to our hotel.

"The Academy at Venice contains the generally admitted *chef-d'œuvre* of Tintoretto, the 'Miracle of St. Mark,' and the 'Great Assumption' by Titian, both works bestowing immortality—in this world—on their producers. I should be wearisome if I were to name a tithe of the great works that honour Venice. In no other place are you able thoroughly to gauge the powers of Paul Veronese and Tintoretto, that unapproached and unapproachable pair. Titian, too—though a lamentable fire destroyed the 'Peter Martyr,' one of his grandest pictures, if we may judge by good copies from it—displays all his strength; unfortunately too often impaired by the bad light in the churches, and by the height over the altars where the sacred pictures have been hanging since the time of their production. The Doge's Palace contains splendid examples of Paul Veronese, notably the 'Europa,' which looks as fresh as if it had been painted yesterday. To those who have never seen Venice it is impossible to impart the sensation with which one finds one's self standing on the marble steps from whence the head

'of Marino Faliero rolled from his shoulders; or with which one sees the crape-covered space in the long line of portraits of the Doges, on which are inscribed his name and crime. I have walked on the Rialto, where Shylock was taunted by Antonio. I have stood in front of the empty seats of the Council of Ten, on the spot from which Othello addressed the 'potent, grave, and reverend signiors.' I have been on the Bridge of Sighs, and into the fearful prisons below them; have seen the exact spot where the headless bodies of the two Foscari were dropped into the secret water—and never, so long as 'memory holds her seat,' can these things pass from me.

"I am familiar with the works of the Bolognese school, and, though familiarity has not bred contempt, it has failed to create admiration; and, as I was told that I could not judge the painters fairly without seeing them in their full strength at Bologna, leaving my family in Venice—I proceeded thither in charge of an excellent courier, Gustave, of whom I may take this opportunity of giving a little account. Gustave Zimmermann, a Swiss by birth, a courier by profession, is a wiry man; iron-gray, rather thin, above middle height, and about fifty years old. He has a sharp irritable face, a long upper lip, curving outwards in the middle, and nice teeth; with a laugh rather too much like the grin of a monkey. His nostrils are set at sharp angles at the end of his nose, and they dilate and turn outwards in a way that denotes the irritability of temper to which he is

certainly subject; and if we get home without some of these Italian fellows sticking a knife into him, I shall be glad. To see him and them gesticulate over half a franc is a sight! He leaves the extortioners with his eyes flashing, muttering: 'Damn rascals! damn tiefs! Dese fellows, dey tink you come into deir damn country joost to put your hands into your pockatès and giff dem all you have got; dat is what dey tink you have come for, damn rogues!'

"One of our party was always alarmed, and not unnaturally, at some of the perilous-looking points of our precipitous drives; and Gustave's delight at the terror—and his demoniac grin as he says, 'Ah! miss is not comfortable; ah! dere is no fear, no danger'—should have been reprobated instead of encouraged by our laughter. Then he would say, 'Now we are joost coming to a terrib' place, where a lady and a leetel child were both keeled;' and his demoniac smile spreads over his monkey-face.

"I do not think Gustave's determination to take me into every church in every town we visit, arises from the promptings that usually take people to church; for I fear he has no settled belief of any kind. He hates priests and despises relics; often saying, 'What a power dose fellows haf over de poor people to get money out of dem! Look at dose marples; what dey must haf cost! and den to hombogue de people with dose kind of tings!'—flying at the relics with which the churches abound.

"His broken English is irresistible. He calls the

Virgin, the Wirgin; the Government, the Gowernament; and 'dose kind of tings' is a comprehensive phrase that he uses to avoid details, as well as to express contempt.

"When we were at Naples he told me I must go and see Wurgle's grave.

"'Who on earth is Wurgle?' said I.

"'Well, you see, he—he wass—he wass a boet, or some of dose sort of tings.'

"'A poet—a poet,' I repeated to myself; 'why, you must mean Virgil.'

"'Yaas, yaas; that is what I say.'

"On the occasion of a visit to one of his favourite churches, when he would stand with his 'Murray,' and read to us in slow, broken English, I asked him about a picture of a Martyrdom that he and I were looking at. He did not hear me distinctly, or else did not understand my inquiry, for he said, mistaking the word 'martyrdom':

"'Who has *murtered dem*, ah? I cannot say dat. I should tink dey haf murtered one another.'

"I must now take leave of Gustave Zimmermann, giving only one more instance of 'English as she is spoke' by him. On the evening of our arrival at an Italian inn, before going to bed, Gustave came for the usual order for next morning's breakfast. Soles were decided upon. I took my ordinary walk in the hotel garden before breakfast. Presently our trusty courier approached me and said in solemn tones, 'Dere is no soles—dere is only *whitening*.'"

"Bologna, May 15.

"The brothers Caracci, with Guido and Guercino, were the most prominent members of the Bolognese school; indeed, they were the founders of it, and an ugly school it is—coarse, big, exaggerated and black. Their works gave me little or no pleasure. Guido is certainly a stronger man than I thought him; but after Titian, Paul Veronese and Tintoretto, he and his school 'pale their ineffectual fire.' Bologna—a part of one of whose sausages we had for our luncheon yesterday—is a quaint old place. The first impression it makes upon you, as you drive to your hotel, is that it is all arcades and arches; for in front of every house in all the streets is a broad pavement, arched over to keep pedestrians in continual shade, I suppose; so you seem to drive through miles of Regent Street Quadrant (since done away), with the difference that at Bologna the columns are connected with each other by arches. There are some fine churches, but I resolutely refused to enter them, as they could not boast of pictures worth a visit."

I rejoined my family at Venice, and left for Milan, on our way to the Italian lakes, which we reached on the 22nd of May. I write:

"We left Milan on the afternoon of Tuesday, and took the steamer at Como, a place at the foot of the lake of that name, and in two or three hours we traversed the larger and better part of it. The mountains are covered with mulberry, olive, and

other trees rising abruptly from the edge of the water; they are of every variety of size and form, and, as you approach or recede from them, they assume colours varying from the most velvety green to tender, pearly, delicate gray. Towns and villages are scattered here and there on the edges of the lake, and sometimes climb a little way up the mountains, which seem to shelter and protect them. Right and left of you open up the most lovely bays and nooks, sometimes stretching for miles; in short, enchantment prevails in this favoured spot. Add to the beauty of the scenery the most balmy air; with sunlight which seems to brighten and penetrate everything, in a way quite unfamiliar to our befogged eyes; the loveliest flowers growing in profusion everywhere—all vegetation in the full summer swing of England—fancy all this, and you will get a faint notion of the charms of Como. As to Maggiore, where we are now, it is the realization of a poet's dream; the view from the window of this room would satisfy the longings of the most romantic dreamer, and would exceed all that he could weave out of his excited brain.

"I can see many miles straight ahead over the lake, and my view is bounded by mountains wrapped in a delicious, gray, moving mist. Right and left of these, mountains again—jagged, sugar-loafed, pyramidal—each casting its neighbour into partial shade. Here and there towns with their tall campanili, looking not unlike rough agates set in emerald, at the mountain's feet; then the lake like burnished steel,

and then the islands! Isola Bella, Pescatori, Isola Madre, and others, dotted here and there on the surface of the water; with the white houses and the dark cypresses reflected in the depths below them. Gustave's promise as we steamed by the rugged shores of Lake Lugano—before Maggiore burst upon us in all its glory—that 'You shall now see someting, dere is such mountains and heels and walleys, and does sort of tings,' was more than realized."

CHAPTER V.

THE BEARDED MODEL.

I BELIEVE I speak elsewhere of its having been my practice, after going through a rather severe course of drawing from the antique, to scour the streets in search of models, from whom I made studies in oil the size of life. I had painted Italian organ-boys—who always went to sleep—chair-menders, knife-grinders, and many others, when the desire possessed me to seek for a man, an old one if possible, who wore a full beard. Fifty years ago, long beards were as rare as a shaven face is likely to be in a few years from this time. Moustaches, except on the lips of military men, were considered signs of foppery and general want of principle. The head of a well-known firm of drapers in Regent Street refused to take a shopman who wore moustaches, or men who parted their hair down the middle. And to this day the employés at one of the great banks in the Strand are compelled to be clean shaven. To illustrate this, I may instance the case of an old servant of the bank, who was attacked severely by erysipelas in the face and head. Even after convalescence the tenderness of

the skin made shaving impossible, but the old clerk begged to be allowed to return to his desk. He was told by one of the principals, in a kind note in answer to his application, that the bank would endeavour to get on without him until his face was in a condition to bear the attention of his razor.

Another example I well remember was that of a book-illustrator, named Stuart, who, according to his own notion, ought to have been on the throne of England instead of drawing on insensible wood-blocks. He could trace his descent from James I. He could sing Jacobite songs, and very well too, and he was certainly very like Charles I. There was not the least doubt about his pedigree, in his own mind; and he was such a nuisance when once launched into the long list of proofs of his royal blood, that we declared our unanimous conviction of the justice of his claims, and implored him to put them forward in the proper quarter, as we were powerless in the matter. The Stuart beard, exactly like Vandyke's portrait of Charles, was the treasured ornament of our friend's face, and though he was assured that the publishers felt such a doubt of his abilities, and such a conviction of his utterly unreliable character and general dishonesty in consequence of his beard (one man going so far as to tell him it cost him two hundred a year), he refused to remove it.

In due course, the Vandyke-brown beard became streaked with silver, then quite white, and our poor friend became poor indeed, and would have died in

extreme poverty had he not received well-deserved assistance from a fund established to meet cases like his.

It will be pretty clear, if what I have said is true, as it most assuredly is, that the difficulty of finding a bearded model would be great; and for some time I was baffled, until one day, when crossing Soho Square, my attention was drawn to a crowd of little boys, who seemed to be teasing an old man in the manner of the London street-boy.

"Why don't you go and get your 'air cut?" said one.

"Yah! where's your bundle of old clothes? yer ain't got 'em in that 'ere basket, 'ave you?" said another. "Let's 'ave a look? You're a Jew, you know—now ain't you?" and so on.

All this because the old man wore a long gray beard, then such a rarity. The young gentlemen had mistaken their man in more senses than one. He was not a Jew, nor was he the feeble creature that he looked; for, as I reached the group, he had taken two of the biggest boys, one in each hand, and was knocking their heads together till they yelled in a key delightful to hear. He was a little out of breath as he threw them head over heels on to the pavement, but soon recovered, and, picking up his basket, turned to me and asked me if I wanted any apples, at the same time opening his basket and showing me his stock. This was my chance, and I proceeded to take advantage of it. I did want a great many apples, and if he would

bring some to an address I gave him, he would find me a good customer. The old man, whose name I found was Ennis, kept his appointment, and was shown into my painting-room.

There was a slight look of alarm at the semi-darkened room, the high window, and the lay figure, to which he gave a very wide berth. An individual who is as ignorant of the requirements of art as my apple merchant was, must be approached with much caution. A too hasty avowal of my intentions had on several occasions placed me in positions of difficulty, not to say danger. A picturesque orange girl, after using unquotable language, threatened me with the police; and an Irishwoman, whose face would have been a fortune to me, told me that I was an impudent young ruffian, and the sooner I "made myself scarce" the better it would be for me. I found Ennis was of Irish extraction, and there was an expression in his eye that acted like a danger-signal. After buying apples enough to satisfy him, I tried to interest him in some of the bric-à-brac common to an artist's studio.

"What's that thing?"

"That," said I, "is called a fez. It's what people wear in the East instead of a hat."

"How rum!"

"It's very comfortable, mind you," said I. "Just you put it on."

No sooner said than done, and the old man took an admiring look at himself in my cheval glass. I fully shared his admiration, for the dull red of the

cap, the furrowed face, and the silvery beard, made a study that Rembrandt would have relished, and to which none but that genius could do full justice. The sale of his stock had put my man into good humour, and I ventured to ask him how old he was.

"How old? I don't know."

"When is your birthday—I suppose you have one?"

"No, I ain't."

"Were you born in Ireland?"

"No—Kent—'opping-time; that's all I know about it. My father and mother was Irish; come over 'opping."

"Did you ever have your likeness taken?"

"Yes, once, when I was a boy. A deaf gent done it; leastways he had a trumpet, and I shouted at 'im."

"A deaf man?" (Gracious goodness, could it be Reynolds!) "What kind of man was he—where did he live?"

"What kind of man? Ah! it's a vast of years ago, you see, and I didn't take particular notice. Civil spoken he was, and gave me a kind of crook to hold."

"Can't you remember where he lived?"

"No, I forget."

"Now, Ennis," said I, "do you mind telling me what profit you make in a day by selling apples?"

"Well, you see—you haven't got a drop of spirits handy, have you? I think I have a kind of chill; but I'm used to that. It ain't only apples. Every

morning of my life—except Sundays, and I'd go then if I could—I goes at daylight, four in summer, seven in winter, to Common Garden Market, and buys things, sometimes one thing and sometimes another, vegetables and that; and some days I makes a profit, and some days I doesn't. You've heard of the Gordon Riots, ain't you? Ah! I was in them; it was in the year seventeen hundred and eighty, that was."

"Have another glass of the rum; it is very old, and won't hurt you."

"Old it is—right you are, sir—like me; but all the better for that. Well, as I was a-saying, them riots. I'd been to the market, and when I come away to go 'ome to my breakfast, which my daughter always give me; she's gone too, long ago—I lives along with my great-granddaughter now—I walks along with the crowd till we come to a street—I forget the name on it—and there was a lot of soldiers a-standing in a line; and if you'll believe me, just as we was all pushing about in front of 'em—I was all of a confusion, and didn't know hardly what I was a-doing off, pushed about here and there—the soldiers up with their guns and fires bang into the middle of us. Some of 'em near me tumbles about as if they was drunk. The soldiers had shot a lot of 'em, and why they didn't shoot me I never could make out to this day. Well, sir, I was pretty strong then, and I ain't weak now, as you see by them boys in the Square as was insulting of me. So I shoves my way back among the people, till I

see a sort of entry kind of place, into a little sort of street, and I gets in there, where I could see no soldiers, nor didn't want to; and I makes up my mind just to wait till things was quiet again. Well, would you believe me, there came some carpenter-looking chaps with boards and things, and they barricaded up both ends of this 'ere passage. What they done it for I dun know. They offered to let me out, but I says, 'No, thank you,' for I knew there was soldiers at both ends. So there I was all that precious day, and my daughter a-crying and a-wondering what had become of me. All day long I could hear the mob a-yelling and a-roaring—things thrown out o' windows seemingly. There, I never heard nothing like it before nor since; and I that hungry! If I'd had apples, or oranges, or carrots, or turnips, or anything I could eat in my basket that day—I'd stuck to my basket, mind you; but what do you think it was what I had got from the market that morning? Why, artichokes, and they ain't good to eat; leastways, not raw."

"Another glass of rum, Ennis, eh? No? well, half one."

"Thank you kindly, sir. Well, them carpenter chaps come at dark and took down their boards, and lets me out; and one on 'em says, 'Look here, young chap, where do you live?' and I up and told him. And says he, 'You'll have to go a round-about, for there's lots of soldiers a-camped out,' he says, 'in the streets, and they won't let nobody pass nowhere.' 'All right, and thank you,' says I. So

I shoulders my basket, and you may believe me or not, I passed by places that had been burnt out—fine houses they was, and crowds standing staring at 'em—but I takes no notice, and home I goes, and upstairs I goes, and shoves my basket under my bed, where I always puts it till I goes out to sell in the morning; and my daughter give me my breakfast and supper all in one."

The rum, and the red cap, and a little flush on the withered cheeks, the old lips and beard a little quivering in the excitement of his story, made up a picture that I so longed to try my hand at, that I plunged into the real business of the day.

"Now look here, Ennis," said I, "you have not told me what your time is worth to *you;* but I will tell you what it is worth to *me*, if you will give me the chance of taking your likeness with that red cap on your head. I will give you five shillings for three hours of your time."

This demand plunged my friend into deep contemplation. He seemed to be trying to remember something.

"No," he said after a pause, "I couldn't take it off; I should get cold. No more I couldn't none of my clothes."

"Take what off?" said I.

"This 'ere beard," he said, handling it. "You see, my hand got a bit shaky, and I was always a-cutting of myself. One morning my granddaughter screeched out that I had cut my throat."

"Goodness, no!" I interrupted; "it's your *beard* I want beyond everything."

"Oh, all right then! You'll want my coat and waistcoat and shirt off, as the deaf gent did, and you see I was young then and didn't mind it; but I should get the rheumatics or something. No, I couldn't do it."

"Bless the man! I don't want you to take off any of your clothes. I only want just to take your likeness—that is, the likeness of your face."

"Oh, is that all? Then why did the old gent make me take off all but my trousers, and give me a crook to hold? There was a lamb in the picture as the old gent done. If you should want a lamb to set, a friend of mine, a butch——"

"No, no; it's you I want, and neither lambs nor butchers."

"Well, sir" (after more consideration), "I see no harm in it—five bob for three hours. You won't mind throwing in a glass or two of that rum? You see, I'm subject to a chill, and sitting still is apt to bring it on."

Upon this happy conclusion a day was fixed for the first sitting.

Painters of the present generation do not, except in rare instances, admire the work of Sir Thomas Lawrence; and they would scarcely credit the influence which that artist exercised over the minds and practice of the young men of my early days. 'Tis true, he had been dead six or seven years before I began my profession; but his spirit seemed to be

amongst us, guiding us generally, I think, in a wrong direction. At any rate, I managed to copy some of his worst faults very successfully, and one or two of my fellow-students followed my example. It is not surprising, then, that I contrived to give a flavour of Lawrence to my rendering of old Ennis. I flattered him, I made him smile, I put those liquid touches into his eyes that Lawrence found in all eyes; and although I confess I did not see them in my old man, they ought to have been there, and there they are accordingly to this day.

I wish I could remember much of the old man's talk, but memory betrays me. 1838 was the year he first sat for me: he could not have been less than eighty years old, probably some years more. He remembered when umbrellas "came in wogue"—what that year was I don't know; he also picked blackberries in the Oxford Road (now Oxford Street), opposite to the building formerly known as the Pantheon. I recommended him as a model (a business to which he never took kindly) to many of my fellow-students, especially to Douglas Cowper; but it is with my own rendering of him that I have to do. As I have said, I made many life-studies for practice, and as soon as they were done and fresh canvas was required, I sent them to an auction-room, kept by one Jones, where, if they sold for what they were worth, public estimation of them was not extravagant, for the best of them never realized more than a few shillings, and Ennis, fez and all, sold for four and ninepence. Well do I recollect

the precise sum, because I bought a hat with it. Four-and-ninepenny hats may be remembered by elderly people, who may have been more fortunate in their purchases than I was. The first shower of rain finished mine; perhaps it was not a good one. Those hats, no doubt, varied in excellence, like other things. It was very shiny, and till the wet weather I was envied by the envious. The hat disappeared very soon indeed after the picture; the former I never saw again, the latter—or what turned out to be a copy of it—greeted my wandering eyes in a picture-shop in York four years afterwards. My first impression was that I looked upon my own work: I recognised the fez, the gray beard, the smile (which seemed to have increased a good deal), and all the rest of it; but a nearer inspection proved to me that the picture was a copy, and somewhat smaller than the original.

"What is the price of the old man with the gray beard, in the window?"

"Two guineas, sir."

"Pray who is it by?"

"By Mr. Rivers, of Hull, sir. We have had several of them from him; they sell readily."

"What! for two guineas apiece?"

"Oh dear yes, sir. They are good sound works of art; we can recommend them. Considered in the Lawrence style, sir."

Strange coincidence! Rivers was a schoolfellow, and is now an old friend of mine. I knew he was an artist, practising in Hull, and from letters received

from him from time to time, I gathered that he was immortalizing aldermen, merchants, sea captains, and others. Why, then, copy my picture? How and where did he get it? Did he know the author of it? These questions I couldn't answer, and the whole matter passed out of my mind. About a year after my vision of the fez and the gray-bearded old man in the York picture-shop, my friend Rivers called on me in London. I returned his call, and found him pleasantly located in the artist quarter in Newman Street, where the high windows cut up into the third floor may still be seen. I was shown into his studio, and the first object that met my astonished gaze was my picture of "Ennis Effendi," magnificently framed, in a place of honour over the chimney-piece. Rivers came in as I was studying my own work. After the customary greetings, and expressing the real pleasure with which I welcomed him to London, my sincere wishes for his success, and so on, my eyes again wandered to the red cap and the gray beard.

"Ah, my boy," said Rivers, "that's a fine thing, isn't it?"

"Pretty well. Who is it by?"

"*Pretty well!*" with contempt. "You are a nice fellow to call a head like that '*Pretty well.* Who is it by?' You ought to know who it's by!"

Well, I do, thought I; but I said:

"It looks to me like an imitation of Lawrence."

"An imitation? Do you mean to tell me that anybody but Lawrence could have painted those

eyes? Now, do look at them close. Here, get upon that chair. Oh! you won't hurt the chair; besides, it isn't mine. Proof enough for you, if you know anything of Lawrence's work, and you ought to know; besides, look here, I have a warranty that I got with it, when I bought it in Newcastle. Here you are. Something Effendi. I can't quite read the name—an old fellow in the suite of one of those swells that Lawrence painted abroad."

I was really sorry to dispel my old friend's illusion; but there was no help for it.

"Lawrence, eh?" said I. "The devil a bit; I painted it myself. It's a portrait of an old fellow I found selling apples in the street."

Rivers knew me too well to doubt what I said. He was dumbfounded for a moment. He then said:

"Do—you" (a pause between each word)—"mean to say—that you—painted—that—picture? Why, I have made at least six copies of it, and sold them for thirty shillings apiece." Then, after another pause, "All I have got to say is, that the sooner you paint some more pictures like it, the better, for it goes a deuced sight beyond anything of yours that I have ever seen."

After this dreadful blow, Rivers confessed that he could no longer bear the sight of his Lawrence. He soon sold it; and the subject, a very sore one to him, was never recurred to again.

Ennis never became what is called a regular model. He was easily offended; and a refusal to

buy an unreasonable quantity of apples, or a doubt expressed of their excellence, would produce a prompt refusal to sit on any terms.

Douglas Cowper, who was far ahead of the rest of us, spoilt the old man very much. He overpaid him, and made himself ill with oranges and apples; but what was most delightful to the vain old creature, was the deference which Cowper pretended to pay to his criticisms, affecting to tone down here, and brighten there, under the direction of the aged critic.

It was in the days of Ennis that I attempted my first composition. His venerable appearance, as I have said elsewhere, suggested Scott's "Last Minstrel," and a dreadful minstrel I made of him —the wicked old man jeering at my efforts, and throwing Cowper at my head constantly.

He never pronounced a name correctly. I was "Thrift," Cowper was "Cowpin," Bridges was "Bridgen," and so on.

"Why, you've made me look a hundred; and I ain't as ugly as that, I know. Jest you see what Cowpin done of me in his piece." (He called our works "pieces" generally, "picturs" sometimes.)

I had but just completed my "Minstrel," when the old man died. His great-granddaughter, who always accompanied him in his latter days to "Common Garden," told me that Ennis stopped suddenly on his homeward journey one morning, put down his basket, and said, "My lass, I'm struck with death!"

He managed to crawl feebly home, lay down on his bed, and in a few hours he was dead.

I shall not let the fear of being charged with blowing my own trumpet deter me from relating here the ultimate fate of my friend Rivers' picture, "Ennis Effendi." The public became slowly aware of his merits, and a bold connoisseur gave between forty and fifty guineas for him at Christie's, where he bore the real name of his author, and he is now settled in perpetuity—for he is an heirloom in a fine mansion near Grosvenor Square, with his history recorded on his back.

CHAPTER VI.

"THE ROAD TO RUIN."

My Italian trip is over. A rapid run to Paris *viâ* Turin, a sight of the Salon Exhibition—and a sorry sight it was—and I find myself at home and at work again. My foreign travel may be credited, or discredited, with two pictures—one, the more important, being a subject suggested by a visit to the dungeons below the Doges' Palace; the other by a sudden attack made upon me one morning by a flower-seller, when I was taking my usual early walk on the Cascine at Naples. Before I could recover from my surprise, my young assailant had seized me by my coat-collar and planted in one of its button-holes a bright little nosegay. Remonstrance was out of the question. I must ransom myself, and I did so by paying a price which, judging from the smile with which it was received, and the 'Thank you, eccellenza,' was perfectly satisfactory. At last, thought I, here is a subject—trifling enough—by which I can fulfil my long-standing promise to my old Scottish friend, who, as my readers may remember, bargained for a picture, the important feature of which must be my own portrait; and my

likeness is 'now added'—to quote Madame Tussaud—to a 'chamber of horrors,' or a charming collection, as the taste and judgment of beholders may determine. The more important picture was a more serious effort. No thoughtful visitor to those dreadful dungeons in Venice can fail to people them with imaginary victims, political and social. My thoughts took the shape of an unfounded charge of social crime, of which a beautiful woman should be the victim. A monk stands in the narrow passage close to the window of her cell, at which he attends to hear the innocent prisoner's confession. The lady, whose patrician dress proclaims her rank, seizes the bars, and with her face pressed against them, pours into the ear of the monk, not a confession, but a passionate protest of her innocence, together with an imploring appeal for deliverance. The confessor listens with a mixed expression of incredulity, sympathy, and helplessness; knowing too well how slight are the chances of innocence escaping, when Italian power and passion have determined to punish. I had arranged my composition, settled the position and attitude of the monk, and progressed to my satisfaction with the female figure, when I found myself in trouble for the monk. I was refused a model from a monastery in London, and at my wits' end; when a strange event occurred. My readers will find in my story of 'The Pious Model'—in a former chapter of these reminiscences—how he went to Australia and established a store for the sale of religious literature at Ballarat. From the day of

my receiving Mr. Bredman's letter containing that interesting announcement, over a quarter of a century of silence had passed, so far as any intelligence of that worthy had reached me. My surprise may be imagined when my servant informed me that 'a person of the name of Bredman, who says he sat to you a long time ago, would like to see you.' 'Let him in,' said I; and in came my pious friend. The five-and-twenty years had scarcely touched him. Not a streak of gray in his shiny black hair, hardly a wrinkle added to his Chadband face; but his outward man, how changed! Instead of the greasy fustian jacket of old, and the trousers patched to such an extent that the original material was difficult to distinguish, the whole man was sheathed in a suit of shining black. My old model offered me his hand, and I took it rejoicing, for I had found a model for my monk.

"Well, Bredman, I am really glad to see you. I need not ask you how you are; but what does that suit of black mean? You are not wearing it in mourning for anyone, I hope."

"Yes, I am, sir; I've come to England to take a legacy. Two hundred pounds comes to me from my father-in-law; very old man, just dead."

"Your *wife's* father?" said I, laying peculiar stress on the word "*wife*."

"Yes, sir," said Bredman, with the old smile.

"Large family, Bredman?" I inquired, also with my old smile.

"Well, that's as may be, sir; I think it was

large enough—nine of 'em. We lost two—seven left."

"Why, this is worse than the first wife, Bredman—eh?"

No reply, but a broader smile.

"Now is this little account true, or is it like the other? Is there a real wife and family this time, Bredman?"

"Yes, sir; upon my word, it is all right this time. My sons are in the Bush, doing well, all of 'em" ("I trust not bushranging," was my mental comment); "my daughters married pretty middling, too."

"And you—what has been your business?"

"Oh, one thing and another. I was town-crier at Melbourne for some years; and now I am under-steward on board an Australian liner: attends to the ladies and gents—pays well when they're ill; cleans boots and such. But now I shall be in London for some months till this law business is settled, and should be very glad of some sitting."

An engagement was made. Bredman proved that his old qualities as a model had not degenerated; nor did I find him attempting any of his old tricks. I employed him for other pictures, and he makes one amongst the betting-men in the picture I afterwards painted of "The Royal Enclosure at Ascot," one of the series called "The Road to Ruin."

I christened my Venetian picture "Under the Doge's Palace," and it was exhibited in 1876. My

other contributions to the Exhibition of 1876 were: "A Scene from the 'Vicar of Wakefield'—The Squire teaching the Young Ladies Picquet and the Boys to Box," which illustrates the following quotation: "The intervals between conversation were employed in teaching my daughters picquet, or sometimes in setting my two little ones to box—to make them sharp, as he called it." An illustration of Molière, and a small picture called "The Lovers' Seat," completed my list.

About this time a committee was formed to make arrangements for the production of a statue of Lord Byron, to be paid for by public subscriptions, and placed in a prominent position in London. I was asked to serve on the committee, and with my friends Elmore and Woolner, formed the professional element in it. Our brother-committeemen were all distinguished individuals; by far the most interesting to me being Trelawney, a very old and striking-looking man, the well-known friend of Byron. The committee met in the classic rooms of Mr. Murray, in Albemarle Street; the courteous owner being also a member To see the rooms, so often honoured by the presence of such men as Byron, Scott, and Moore—to say nothing of so many only less great—and to be surrounded by their portraits, was very delightful to me; but to be talked to by Trelawney was more delightful still. He sat next to me on one occasion, and talked much of Byron; frequently mentioning the elder Murray, whose son was well within earshot, as a capital

fellow, liberal to a degree; and in Byron's case he found his honesty pay, "for Byron told me," said Trelawney, "that all he had received from Murray was between twenty and thirty thousand pounds—nearer twenty than thirty; and that Murray made over seventy thousand by Byron. Not bad business that—eh?"

The result of the committee's work is known to all. Being in a minority—an adverse minority, indeed—the professional members of the committee can claim no credit for the selection of the sculptor, nor are they to be blamed if the statue is considered unsatisfactory. We were outvoted by gentlemen who were God-gifted with a knowledge of art which all our lives' devotion had failed to give us—in their opinion. Disraeli said "the critics are those who have failed in literature and art." With the judges of literary work I have no concern; but in respect of those whose business it is to write public criticisms on art, I have to say that few of the gentlemen or ladies who praise or condemn modern painters and sculptors have practised art in any form, so the charge of their having failed in it falls to the ground. They are people of some literary attainment, as is evident by their writing. But the mystery attending their wonderful knowledge of art in all its forms is one of those things—if I may use the words of that eminent peer, Lord Dundreary—'that no fellow can understand.' When I bring to my memory the many instances of the diffidence in expressing opinion on art, so often witnessed by myself in

such men as Landseer, Turner, and others nearly as eminent, I cannot help being awe-struck by the laying down of the law by our modern experts. Infallibility is not monopolized by the Pope; but what can be said for a public which is led by printed opinion expressed by persons who would not be listened to for a moment if their efficiency as judges could be gauged. If we could be judged by our peers as literary men are, we should be profited, in all probability. What would writers say if a body of artists were employed to direct public taste in literary matters? Surely the two positions are equally absurd. I must now return to my own doings.

For a long time I had the desire to paint a story in a series of pictures, and I began to make chalk-studies of the different groups for the five pictures called "The Road to Ruin." Without any pretension to do my work on Hogarthian lines, I thought I could show some of the evils of gambling; my idea being a kind of gambler's progress, avoiding the satirical vein of Hogarth, for which I knew myself to be unfitted. I desired to trace the career of a youth from his college days to his ruin and death—a victim to one of the most fatal vices. In the first scene my hero is entertaining a party of friends in his college-room, who have played at cards all night. One of them, perhaps the youngest, has fallen asleep on a sofa, whilst the rest are still engaged in furious play. The window-curtain is drawn aside by one of the non-players, and the dawn is evident by the

lighting up of the towers of an opposite college by the earliest rays of the sun. Another guest blows out a candle no longer needed. In the second picture my youth has grown to manhood, and is engaged in far more dangerous play than three-card loo; for he is the centre of attraction in the Royal Enclosure at Ascot to a horde of betting-men, who are offering him chance after chance of immediate or prospective ruin. That they have succeeded is made evident by the third of the series, where the young man is seen in his ancestral home—with his wife and children—in the hands of bailiffs who have arrested him for debt. An interval, more or less long, is supposed to elapse between the third and fourth acts, when we find him away from his native land endeavouring to earn a subsistence by writing plays; whilst his wife devotes herself to painting in water-colours in the hope of selling her work, and thus adding to their slender means. A French landlady presses for her rent, the wife appeals to the woman, and the husband is in despair. Matters are supposed to go from bad to worse, till at last, driven to desperation, my luckless hero is seen in the fifth and last picture fastening the door of a miserable attic, with an expression on his face that, assisted by a pistol ready to his hand, admits of but one interpretation—death by his own hand. For these different pictures careful chalk-drawings were made, groups rearranged, compositions changed; in fact, all the *thinking* part of the business was settled before the small oil-sketches were made. With this preliminary care, alterations

in the final pictures are avoided, time is actually saved, and the work of the artist, undisturbed by changes—unavoidable without this care—is more likely to *endure* than those so often commenced without due study and precaution.

Being a worshipper of Shelley, and having read everything respecting him that came in my way, it was with great pleasure that I made the acquaintance of his son, Sir Percy Shelley, and his delightful wife, whose invitation to their house at Boscombe I eagerly accepted. It was not a matter of surprise to find a room full of Shelley relics: there is the wave-washed Æschylus found upon the drowned poet's body; likenesses of him in abundance; locks of his fair hair; and much of his manuscript, adorned here and there with pen-and-ink sketches which show great artistic power. There is the portrait of his wife, the daughter of Godwin, a rather ideal likeness of a lady I can well remember seeing at one of the soirées at the Royal Academy; another of her mother, by Opie; and one also of Godwin, by Northcote. I can trace a likeness to the poet in his son, who seems to inherit his father's love of the sea. It was at Sir Percy's table that I met Mr. Grantley Berkeley, a very original and amusing person, whose bachelor home, not far from Boscombe, was so contrived as to gratify its owner's sporting tastes, and also the tastes of those interested in past times, when the Berkeleys played conspicuous parts in their country's history. Here is the bed from Berkeley Castle in which Edward II. was done to an awful

death; and round about the room were relics almost as interesting.

One life only stopped the way to wealth and title for Mr. Grantley Berkeley, the direct heir to the earldom of Fitzhardinge; death came to the aspirant, who died as he had lived, plain Grantley Berkeley.

Before I made the acquaintance of the Shelleys, I had done a slight sketch of one of the love-scenes that took place between the poet and Mary Godwin in old St. Pancras Churchyard. I found the graveyard still in existence, and I found a tombstone that might have been the one on which so many passionate words were spoken; and on it I placed my figures. The Boscombe portraits were my authority for the likenesses, but I failed to realize my own idea of either of the personages. It would require powers far beyond mine to do justice to the theme I had chosen. I did my best, and subjected myself to a proverb which I fear can be justly applied to my performance.

In the year 1887 I did not contribute to the Annual Exhibition; the whole of that year being taken up in incessant work at the pictures of "The Road to Ruin." The difficulties in respect of models and material were increased by the variety of men, women, and matter required. Genius, as everybody knows, is often accompanied by grievous failings in one form or other; and the greater the genius the more glaring are the shortcomings. The artist's model in his or her highest development—for which genius is but a mild term—is not exempt from serious

drawbacks. He "drinks," perhaps, and an indulgence in that luxury is apt to engender forgetfulness of engagements; or he comes to his work one hour late, but before he has recovered from a previous night's debauch: he is then either gloomy, with a tendency to impertinence, or he chatters till he distracts the unhappy man whose time has been wasted, and whose efforts to paint from a restless, fidgety creature leave a deplorable result. No matter, you have begun from the man, and you must finish from him; you are his victim, and you must endure and suffer much. But the worm turns at last, and then, having completed your figure, you remark:

"Now, Green, attend to what I am going to say. You are a perfect genius at sitting when you are all right; you tell capital stories, and you are generally respectful, but you drink."

"Drink, sir!" interrupts Mr. Green; "why, I am a teetotaler; I took the pledge some time since!"

"Very likely, and you most certainly broke it before you came to me the other day. Now if you come to me in that condition again, or if you fail once more in being punctual to the time named, you may bid farewell to any employment by me."

"All right, sir," says Green; but it was not all right, for the annoyance was repeated. I immediately sent Green about his business, and I have never seen him since. I here tell one of his stories, which was new to me.

A Scottish clergyman preached a series of sermons on the Miracles, and in one of them he took

for his text the swallowing of the Prophet Jonah by the whale. The reverend gentleman either took exception to the translation of the word "whale," or he affected to do so, for the purpose of showing his knowledge of varieties of fish; for after describing several, and showing in each case, from the construction of the creature, that swallowing a human being was a matter of impossibility, he then—evidently leading up to the usually received explanation of the miracle—discussed the shark, or the *shairk*, as he called it, as being the fish so highly honoured. "But no," said the clergyman, "it couldna be a shairk; the teeth of the creetur would have destroyed——"

"Ech, meenister," cried out an old woman who was sitting below the pulpit, "wasna the beast a whale?"

"A whale, a whale, ye blethering auld deevil! what do ye know about it? What do ye mean by taking the Word of God out of my mouth?"

Mr. Green stood to me for many figures in "The Road to Ruin," and I parted from him with real regret. I was obliged to discharge another of the higher order of model for a very different reason. Mr. Gloster was a young, good-looking fellow, who wrote an excellent hand—to use a common phrase—was well-read, intelligent, and incomprehensible. I am convinced the man was perfectly honest and sober; the tone of his voice, his manner—when he was not disgustingly familiar—and his conversation, were those of a gentleman; and how it

happened that he took up the business of a professional model, in preference to so many for which he was undoubtedly well fitted, I know not. He was very ready in assuming any expression or attitude that was explained to him, but he very much objected to difficult positions; and after enduring a pose a little painful for a short time, he would say, with a deep groan:

"This is awful! Oh, you needn't laugh; just try it yourself, and see how you like it!"

The value of Mr. Gloster may be imagined when such an uncommon address as the above was endured patiently. The man put himself on a level with me at once, and at times his insolence was very difficult to bear. He told me he had no notion of social distinction—everybody was as good as anybody else; and he considered himself rather better. Artists wouldn't employ him if they didn't want him; and he shouldn't go to them if he didn't want them; and he didn't see what obligation there was on either side.

"Was he often without employment?"

"Yes, he was; and then he starved. If he got any money, he would spend it and have a jolly good dinner, and go without dinner next day."

"Wasn't that rather foolish?"

"No; and if it was, what had anybody got to do with it?—he didn't care," and so on.

The man tried me dreadfully; but—there again, I had begun several figures from him—he looked the gentleman, and wore the clothes I provided with an

air impossible to the ordinary model, so I bore with him for a long time. It is my habit to employ the same model all day, providing him with dinner at noon; I give instructions that sufficient food should always be supplied. No doubt the supply, as well as the kind of food, varied; but it was very difficult to please Mr. Gloster.

"Look here," he said to me one day, "this is a poor reward for standing in that infernal attitude all the morning. The servant must take me for a blackbird."

This pretty speech because there was rather less meat than usual. The last feather that kills the camel came at last, and it was in this way:

My servant brought Gloster a large plateful of cold veal for his dinner. I saw it, and said:

"Well, they have given you enough to eat this time."

"Yes," said the man, "there's a lot of it. I hate veal, particularly cold veal! If there had been anything I like downstairs, I should have had little enough of it. I say" (to the servant, who was leaving the room), "can't you get me some bacon, or pickles, or something to give this stuff a relish?"

"No," said the girl, "I can't."

"Now," said I, "Mr. Gloster, do you know that if you had to deal with some painters they would have turned you out of their rooms for such a speech as that?"

"Ah! I dare say they are precious fools, some of them; but you are not one."

He was mistaken—I was; and from that day to this I have never set eyes on Mr. Gloster; though I hear of him occasionally, and his reign everywhere seems short. A friend of mine told me the following little anecdote:

A chop was sent to Mr. Gloster, while my friend took his own luncheon in his dining-room. When the servant placed the food before the model, he asked her very politely if she had a pair of spectacles.

"No," said the girl; "what should I do with spectacles?"

"Ah, to be sure! Well, now, what age may the cook be?"

"I don't know," was the reply.

"Well, would you mind asking her if she could oblige me with a pair? I wouldn't keep them a minute."

The message was conveyed to the cook, who indignantly said:

"Drat the man! What does he think I want with spectacles? I have got no such thing! Go and ask him what he wants spectacles for."

"The cook doesn't wear spectacles," said the girl, addressing the model, "and there ain't such a thing in the house; and she wishes to know what you want spectacles for."

"Well," said Gloster, looking intently into his plate (on which, my friend said, there was a small chop), "I want to see what this is; it's undiscoverable with the naked eye!"

My experience of the ladies who honour us by sitting is extensive. As a rule, they are all that could be desired—patient, kindly, long-suffering, and well-behaved. I confess to a strong liking for many of my models, male and female. I am grateful to them for valuable assistance, and never in my life have I had the least "difficulty" with the greater number of them; indeed, instances of misbehaviour amongst the females are very rare indeed, and they usually consist of unpunctuality, which is a deadly sin. The kindness of lady friends rendered the employment of the professional model almost needless in the pictures of "The Road to Ruin." These works were exhibited in 1878, and, judging by the public attention they received, may be said to have been successful. The policeman and the rail were again required; and I received many compliments, and no doubt much abuse. The copyright was purchased by the Art Union of London, and the pictures were etched by one of the greatest professors of that art in France; but from some cause or other (the fault, probably, was in the pictures) the etchings were not successful.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FONTHILL STORY.

THE late Mr. Phillips, the well-known Bond Street auctioneer, was an intimate friend of my uncle Scaife's, at whose house I frequently met him; and though I was a very young student fifty years ago, and quite incapable of properly appreciating fine works of art, I often, at Mr. Phillips's suggestion, visited his rooms whenever great collections were dispersed there. Hearing that a Holy Family by Raphael was to be sold, I went to see it, and though it was of doubtful authenticity, I thought it was a very fine picture. I was discussing its merits—with all the ignorant assurance of youth—with Mr. Phillips in his office, when an elderly gentleman walked briskly past the door on his way to the gallery. He was a short man, dressed in a green coat with brass buttons, leather breeches, and top-boots, and his hair was powdered. "That is Mr. Beckford," said Phillips. I had just read "Vathek," and was very curious to see the author of it; so I rushed upstairs to the auction-rooms, and found the great little man studying the so-called Raphael. I

stood close to the picture, and studied Mr. Beckford, who proceeded to criticise the work in language of which my respectable pen can give my readers but a faint idea. It must not be thought that the remarks were addressed to me or to anybody but the speaker himself. "That d——d thing a Raphael! Great heavens! think of that now! Can there be such d——d fools as to believe that a Raphael! What a d——d fool I was to come here!" and without a glance at other pictures, the critic departed.

It was many years after this that a distant connection of mine, who, I must premise, was a person of an inquiring mind, found himself involved in a curious adventure. My relative had been in business, from which he retired at an unusually early time of life, having acquired a handsome competence. He was married, but childless, and having bought a house in the salubrious city of Bath, he retired there, and passed his time in reading and in finding out everything he could about all the people in the place. There was one house, and that the most interesting of all, that shut its door against my inquisitive friend and everybody else. Fonthill Abbey, or Fonthill Splendour, as it was sometimes called, situated a few miles from Bath, was a treasure-house of beauty. Every picture was said to be a gem, and the gardens were unequalled by any in England, the whole being guarded by a dragon in the form of Mr. Beckford. "Not only," says an authority, "had the art-treasures of that princely place been sealed against the public, but the

park itself—known by rumour as a beautiful spot—had for several years been inclosed by a most formidable wall, about seven miles in circuit, twelve feet high, and crowned by a *chevaux-de-frise*." These formidable obstacles my distant cousin undertook to surmount, and he laid a wager of a considerable sum that he would walk in the gardens, and even penetrate into the house itself.

Having nothing better to do, he spent many an anxious hour in watching the great gate in the wall, in the hope that by some inadvertence it might be left open and unguarded; and one day that happy moment arrived. The porter was ill, and his wife opened the gate to a tradesman, who, after depositing his goods at the lodge (no butcher or baker was permitted to go to the Abbey itself), retired, leaving the gate open, relying probably upon the woman's shutting it. Quick as thought my relative passed the awful portals, and made his way across the park. Guided by the high tower—called "Beckford's Folly"—my inquisitive friend made his way to the gardens, and not being able immediately to find the entrance, was leaning on a low wall that shut the gardens from the park, and taking his fill of delight at the gorgeous display—the gardens being in full beauty—when a man with a spud in his hand—perhaps the head-gardener—approached, and asked the intruder how he came there, and what he wanted.

"The fact is, I found the gate in the wall open, and having heard a great deal about this beautiful place, I thought I should like to see it."

"Ah!" said the gardener, "you would, would you? Well, you can't see much where you are. Do you think you could manage to jump over the wall? If you can, I will show you the gardens."

My cousin looked over the wall, and found such a palpable obstacle—in the shape of a deep ditch—on the other side of it, that he wondered at the proposal.

"Oh, I forgot the ditch! Well, go to the door; you will find it about a couple of hundred yards to your right, and I will admit you."

In a very short time, to his great delight, my cousin found himself listening to the learned names of rare plants, and inhaling the perfume of lovely flowers. Then the fruit-gardens and hot-houses—"acres of them," as he afterwards declared—were submitted to his inspection. After the beauties of the gardens and grounds had been thoroughly explored, and the wager half won, the inquisitive one's pleasure may be imagined when his guide said:

"Now, would you like to see the house and its contents? There are some rare things in it—fine pictures and so on. Do you know anything about pictures?"

"I think I do, and should, above all things, like to see those of which I have heard so much; but are you sure that you will not get yourself into a scrape with Mr. Beckford? I've heard he is so very particular."

"Oh no!" said the gardener. "I don't think

Mr. Beckford will mind what I do. You see, I have known him all my life, and he lets me do pretty well as I like here."

"Then I shall only be too much obliged."

"Follow me, then," said the guide.

My distant cousin was really a man of considerable taste and culture, a great lover of art, with some knowledge of the old masters and the different schools; and he often surprised his guide, who, catalogue in hand, named the different pictures and their authors, by his acute and often correct criticisms. So intimate was his acquaintance with the styles of some of the different painters, that he was frequently able to anticipate his guide's information. When the pictures had been thoroughly examined, there remained bric-à-brac of all kinds—costly suits of armour, jewellery of all ages, bridal coffers beautifully painted by Italian artists, numbers of ancient and modern musical instruments, with other treasures, all to be carefully and delightedly examined, till, the day nearing fast towards evening, the visitor prepared to depart, and was commencing a speech of thanks in his best manner, when the gardener said, looking at his watch:

"Why, bless me, it's five o'clock! ain't you hungry? You must stop and have some dinner."

"No, really, I couldn't think of taking such a liberty. I am sure Mr. Beckford would be offended."

"No, he wouldn't. You must stop and dine with me; I am Mr. Beckford."

My far-off cousin's state of mind may be imagined. He had won his wager, and he was asked, actually asked, to dine with the man whose name was a terror to the tourist, whose walks abroad were so rare that his personal appearance was unknown to his neighbours. What a thing to relate to his circle at Bath! How Mr. Beckford had been belied, to be sure! The dinner was magnificent, served on massive plate—the wines of the rarest vintage. Rarer still was Mr. Beckford's conversation. He entertained his guest with stories of Italian travel, with anecdotes of the great in whose society he had mixed, till he found the shallowness of it; in short, with the outpouring of a mind of great power and thorough cultivation. My cousin was well read enough to be able to appreciate the conversation and contribute to it, and thus the evening passed delightfully away. Candles were lighted, and host and guest talked till a fine Louis Quatorze clock struck eleven. Mr. Beckford rose and left the room. The guest drew his chair to the fire, and waited the return of his host. He thought he must have dozed, for he started to find the room in semi-darkness, and one of the solemn powdered footmen putting out the lights.

"Where is Mr. Beckford?" said my cousin.

"Mr. Beckford has gone to bed," said the man, as he extinguished the last candle.

The dining-room door was open, and there was a dim light in the hall.

"This is very strange," said my cousin; "I

expected Mr. Beckford back again. I wished to thank him for his hospitality."

This was said as the guest followed the footman to the front-door. That functionary opened it wide and said:

"Mr. Beckford ordered me to present his compliments to you, sir, and I am to say that as you found your way into Fonthill Abbey without assistance, you may find your way out again as best you can; and he hopes you will take care to avoid the bloodhounds that are let loose in the gardens every night. I wish you good-evening. No, thank you, sir; Mr. Beckford never allows vails."

My cousin climbed into the branches of the first tree that promised a safe shelter from the dogs, and there waited for daylight; and it was not till the sun showed himself that he made his way, terror attending each step, through the gardens into the park, and so to Bath. "The wager was won," said my relative; "but not for fifty million times the amount would I again pass such a night as I did at Fonthill Abbey."

I am in a position to assure my reader that this story of Fonthill Abbey is absolutely true.

CHAPTER VIII.

"THE RACE FOR WEALTH."

As I approach the present time, I feel a difficulty in speaking of my own work. Indeed, the task at any time is not an agreeable one; but it is made easier in the case of pictures which have long taken a settled place, so to speak, in public estimation. Time was required to effect that; and time must pass, and a good deal of it, before modern work can be estimated at its true value. Notoriety is not fame; and when it is remembered that an obscure artist, called Glover, found ready sale for his landscapes, whilst Gainsborough's were neglected; that Romney fell out of fashion while in the plenitude of his power; that Constable only sold his works with difficulty, and at very small prices; and that Turner had a whole gallery full of pictures that he could not sell—it is wrong to rely on popularity as a proof of merit, or the neglect engendered by fashion, and fed by ignorance (which is the fate of all painters, sooner or later), as evidence of failing powers.

In this year a great International Exhibition was held in Paris, when the English School of Painters

received worthy recognition. Most of the principal British painters were well represented; and the French artists, to their great surprise, it is said, found that there was really a school of art in England worthy the name. I went to Paris with two friends, one of whom was Millais, and we were received very graciously by many of the French painters; Millais, of course, carrying away, as he deserved, the lion's share of applause. We were not surprised at the kindness of our reception; but the houses—palaces would be the better name—in which some of the artists lived surprised me very much. Millais and Leighton are pretty decently lodged; but Detaille and Meissonier outstrip them in splendour. I had never seen either of these gentlemen before, and when I was introduced to a demonstrative little man as brisk as a boy of twenty—attired in black dress trousers and a blue silk blouse, open in front, disclosing a bright red shirt, a long gray beard falling over the latter—as M. Meissonier, I had an example before me of the truth of the saying, that big souls often locate themselves in small bodies. Detaille is a soldierly-looking man, reminding one of the figures he draws so well; but his house! and his bed! the latter a marvellous structure—we had a sight of it from his studio: black and gold splendour — I told him I should be afraid to sleep in it.

We met our old friend Gambart in Paris, with whom was De Keyser, the head of the Academy at Antwerp. He had come to Paris mainly to paint

portraits of Millais and my humble self, for introduction into a large composition to be executed by him on the walls of Gambart's house at Nice. We take our place in a group of contemporary painters.

Sarah Bernhardt, actress, sculptor and painter, is a friend of Mr. Gambart's, and as we were desirous of an introduction to a person so celebrated, a day was fixed for our visit. We were admitted through large gates into a garden, with little tables dotted about. Carpeted steps led up to the chief entrance; we passed it and found ourselves in a large hall, furnished with magnificence in the shape of sculpture, armour, clocks, etc. Only a rapid glance was possible, as we were ushered immediately into the studio—many more sculptures in various states of incompleteness, huge tropical plants and unfinished pictures—and, as we entered, a boy dressed in white, with yellow hair, sprang from a sofa and greeted us warmly. The seeming boy was Miss Sarah Bernhardt, whose masculine attire was assumed for the convenience it afforded for the practice of the art she loves far more than that in which she is so famous. She made the astounding declaration to me that she hated acting; and would rather succeed in painting or sculpture, or in both, than in any other earthly calling.

Of her painting I cannot speak, for I saw no completed work; but her sculpture surprised us all, and left little doubt that if she devoted herself entirely to that art she would take a high place amongst its professors. We saw her play in Voltaire's "Zaire," and also in Victor Hugo's "Hernani," and from these

performances, and what I have seen since, I consider Sarah Bernhardt by far the greatest actress I ever saw. Old playgoers say she is surpassed by Rachel; that actress I never saw, but I cannot conceive it possible for acting to go beyond that of this wonderful woman.

Encouraged by the success of the "Road to Ruin," I immediately embarked in a new venture: a series of five pictures representing the career of a fraudulent financier, or promoter of bubble companies; a character not uncommon in 1877, or, perhaps, even at the present time. I wished to illustrate also the common passion for speculation, and the destruction that so often attends the indulgence of it, to the lives and fortunes of the financier's dupes. I planned my first scene in the office of the financier—eventually called the spider—the principal flies being an innocent-looking clergyman, who with his wife and daughters are examining samples of ore supposed to be the product of a mine—a map of which is conspicuous on the wall—containing untold wealth. The office is filled with other believers: a pretty widow with her little son, a rough country gentleman in overcoat and riding-boots, a foreigner who bows obsequiously to the great projector as he enters from an inner office—in which clerks are seen writing—whilst a picture-dealer attends with "a gem," which he hopes to sell to the great man, whose taste for art is not incompatible with his love of other people's money. Other flies buzz round the web.

The second picture represents the spider at home.

He is here discovered in a handsome drawing-room, receiving guests who have been invited to an entertainment. He stands—in evening dress—extolling the merits of a large picture to a group of his guests, one of whom, a pretty girl, shows by her smothered laugh that she appreciates the vulgar ignorance of the connoisseur, whose art terms are evidently ludicrously misapplied. The double drawing-room contains many figures, some of whom may be recognised as the clients in the first scene at the office; others are of "the upper ten," whose admiration of success, combined with the hope of sharing in it, so often betrays them into strange company.

If "misfortune makes a man acquainted with strange bedfellows," the converse is no less true; for who has not been startled by the appearance of an uncouth and vulgar figure in what is called "high society," who, on inquiry, has proved to have had but one cause for his admission, namely, the possession of great wealth, and the reputation of having acquired it by successful speculation; the secret of which his hosts hope to ascertain and practise?

After this moral reflection, for which I must ask pardon, I proceed with my description. My host's wife, of a vulgar type, receives more guests announced by the butler, the open door allowing evidence of the approaching banquet to be seen. Hungry guests examine their watches, other guests arrive, and the company goes to a dinner which must be left to my reader's imagination.

In the third of the series the crash has come.

The foolish clergyman sits at his breakfast-table, with his head bent to the blow. His wife, with terrified face, reads the confirmation of her worst fears in the newspaper; which a retreating footman has brought. Two daughters have risen terror-stricken from their chairs, and a little midshipman son looks at the scene with a puzzled expression, in which fear predominates. The catastrophe is complete: the little fortune has been invested in the mine, and the whole of it lost. But my hero has been over-bold; he has produced ore which his impending trial proves to be the product of a mine, but not of the one in which his unhappy victims took shares. He is arrested, and takes his place in the dock at the Old Bailey, where we must now follow him, and also arrive at the fourth of the scenes in "The Race for Wealth." See the financier there standing with blanched face listening to the evidence given by the clergyman, which, if proved, will consign him to penal servitude. His victims—recognisable as those in his office in the opening of my story—stand ready to add their testimony. The widow, the foreigner, the country gentleman, are there; and also are some of his aristocratic guests, one of whom studies his miserable face by the aid of an opera-glass. The counsel and the jury examine the real and the spurious, specimens of ore. The evidence overwhelming, the verdict is pronounced; and that it is "Guilty" is proved by the final scene, where in prison-garb the luckless adventurer takes his dismal exercise with his fellow-convicts in the great quad-

rangle of Millbank Gaol. And so ends my tale; and my object is accomplished—rightly or wrongly conceived—that both those who, in their eagerness to become rich, rush into rash speculation, and the man who cheats them, should all be punished. In the comic paper called *Fun*, the admirable artist of that journal, Mr. Sullivan, laid hold of my puppets, and made them play a different game. He represented the clergyman as ruined, it is true; but he declined to punish the swindler, who rolls along a street in his carriage accompanied by his vulgar wife, without the least display of sympathy for the poor parson, who is reduced to sweeping a crossing over which the carriage has just passed. I will not dispute the probability of the truth of my friend Sullivan's version, for I know instances of it; but, naturally, I prefer my own. With a view to truthfulness, I visited several offices in the City—stockbrokers' and others—in order that my swindler's surroundings in his place of business should be *en règle;* but I found so strong an objection on the part of my stockbroking friends to any of their offices being used for my purpose, that I was obliged to evolve one out of my inner consciousness. Having no such scruples, I did not hesitate to use my own drawing-room as a reception-room for my hero's company; and the Old Bailey being common property, I found no difficulty in taking measurements and photographs of that dreadful place. I examined every part of it. I made my way from Newgate through subterranean passages to the dock, in which I took my place as an

imaginary criminal. I tried to realize the impression that the sight of the judge, with the sword of justice over him, together with a crowded court, would produce on the half-dazed eyes of the poor wretch who had come upon the scene through those dim passages. I hear of an intention to pull down the old court, which is, no doubt, in many respects inconvenient. If that should happen, my trial-scene will acquire an additional interest; for, well or ill done, it is an exact representation of the Old Bailey.

I derived great assistance from the eminent personages whose duties so often take them there, who all expressed their willingness to sit for my picture. First, the judge, my old friend Baron Huddleston, in the kindest manner, donned his robes, and sat so well for me that a good likeness is the result. Valuable assistance was afforded by Alderman Sir Thomas Gabriel, who takes his place on the bench near the judge. I may say the same of the officers of the court, and of the clerk of arraigns, Mr. Avory, whose portrait is considered very like him. The barristers in the picture represent Serjeant Ballantine, Mr. Poland, and Montagu Williams, all of whom gave up many hours of valuable time in my favour. I did not omit the well-known face of Mr. George Lewis, nor can I forget to thank him in this place for his good offices. With respect to the prison at Millbank, admission was difficult, unless I qualified myself by a proceeding which, however easy it might make my entrance, would effectually preclude my voluntary exit. Armed, then, with a

letter of introduction from a high personage, I sought the Governor of Millbank, and in Captain Talbot Harvey I found a man in authority who most readily promised me every kind of assistance, only requiring compliance with certain easy conditions. I should see many prisoners, but I must not speak to any of them. I minutely explained my object.

"Yes, you shall see the prisoners taking their constitutional in one of the courtyards."

"How far are they apart as they walk?"

"Well, far enough to prevent the probability of communication—though, in spite of every care to prevent it, they manage to speak, but very rarely; for the first nine months of their punishment they are condemned to dead silence. You will want a prison-dress to paint from? Ah, that will be difficult. We shall see. Now I will take you where you like." Then, looking at the clock, the governor added, "This is just the time the prisoners take their walk."

My guide conducted me, accompanied by a tall warder, through passages and doors which were unlocked to admit us to other passages, and always carefully locked behind us, till we arrived at a large irregular quadrangle, where fifty or sixty men in fustian suits, marked with the broad arrow, were walking rapidly one after another, always preserving the prescribed distance, in a dreadful circle; not a sound but the monotonous tramp. Two warders only, placed at opposite sides of the circle, were enough to control this ghastly assembly. The first thought of a stranger would be that the warders

were in danger, and I expressed myself to that effect to the governor.

"Oh no, there is no fear. A preconcerted attack is impossible; and should an attempt be made by any of the more violent, the rest would help the officers."

Noticing the pale faces, made additionally grim by partly-grown beards, I remarked:

"I thought the prisoners were always shaved!"

"Yes," said Captain Harvey, "we used to shave them all; but it was found so difficult to keep the razors in order, and the poor fellows complained so much of the pain of being shaved by bad razors, that we cut their beards short instead."

As the prisoners passed and repassed us, I noticed faces that retained an air of breeding and refinement (some so young!) that the prison-dress and the stubby beard could not efface; and I displayed a perhaps pardonable curiosity to know the name and crime of one whose walk even betrayed the gentleman.

"No," said my courteous guide; "it would be quite irregular to disclose the name or the crime of any prisoner, and for one good reason, among many others: you might possibly meet the very man you inquire about in society, and that before very long; and it would be manifestly wrong in us to deprive him of the advantage his evening dress and full-grown beard would give him in evading discovery of his unfortunate antecedents. I may perhaps surprise you when I tell you that several of those you see exercising are going through their second

and third terms of five years' penal servitude. Strange, isn't it? I should have thought one term would be enough, but no; and the way they will deny their previous convictions is curious. One man (whose face I knew again in a moment), when I said to him, 'So here you are again!' declared, with a wonderful assumption of innocent truthfulness, 'Me, sir; no, sir. I never was in prison in my life before.' I was staggered for a moment, but a second look convinced me. I sent for a collection of photographs, selected the gentleman's likeness (taken, as all prisoners are, after conviction), and showing it to him, said, 'That's you, isn't it?'

"'Well, sir,' said the man, turning the photograph about and looking at it with the air of a connoisseur, 'I shouldn't have knowed it myself;' then with an air of frankness, 'but if a gent like you says it's me, it don't become such a cove as me to contradict you, you know, sir.'"

In my sketch of the prisoners exercising, I had committed the important mistake of making them walk within speaking-distance of each other; the dress I had imagined was as unlike as possible to the real one; and of the architecture of a prison-yard I was fortunately ignorant. These mistakes were now to be easily rectified, provided I could be permitted to take photographs of the quadrangle, and be furnished with one of the convict's dresses. There was much hesitation on the part of the authorities before the dress was lent to me; and it was only on my undertaking that I would avoid the slightest resem-

blance to any of the prisoners whose exercise I had watched, that my request was granted. I need scarcely say I carefully selected types that may some day take their constitutional at Millbank, but are at present more or less respectable members of society. I went several times to the prison, and was consigned to a warder who, less reticent than the governor, but equally careful not to infringe rules, told me some amusing stories of the prisoners, one of which shall be recorded.

The burglar Peace—whose crimes and fate are well known—was what the warder styled "a first-class prisoner." He had served a long period of imprisonment before he committed the murders which consigned him to the scaffold; and during the latter portion of it he was allowed, partly as an indulgence for his good behaviour, to practise an art in which he displayed much ingenuity; namely, that of cutting out of a rough kind of cardboard a variety of objects—birds, beasts, fishes, houses, and the like. The royal arms was a favourite subject. I was shown one of these, and really the lion and the unicorn showed the true feeling of an artist. He coloured his productions when paints were available.

"A little too glaring," the warder said, "but very pretty. He was a good talker too, sir, was Peace; he wouldn't mind telling lots of burgling stories. He was a first-class burglar, we considered him. Well, one day he said to me:

"'What a sad thing it is that when once a person gets a character for being untruthful, nobody will

believe what he says! Now, to give you an idea, Mr. Green,' says he (Green's my name, sir), 'there was a friend of mine, a chemist, at Clapham. He had a prejudice against me because I had told him lies now and then; and one day I was in his shop smoking a cigar. I'd gone for some physic, not feeling quite the thing; and he says to me, says he, sniffing up:

"'"That's a fine cigar you are smoking, Peace," he says. "Where might you have got those cigars?"

"'"I stole 'em," I said.

"'"Did you?" says he, laughing. "I wish you would steal some for me."

"'"Well, I will," said I; and a few days after I goes into his shop with half a boxful of same cigars. "There you are," says I; "I have stolen some for you, as I promised." Well, he laughs again more than ever; but he didn't believe me, though I assure you I had told him the truth."'"

An innocent man was very nearly being hanged for one of Mr. Peace's murders. On being discharged from the care of my friend Mr. Green, Peace at once resumed his burglarious profession. He always went armed, as a precaution, and, to use his own words, "not with any idea of hurting nobody;" and it was only when he found himself so hard pressed, after committing a burglary, as to leave him the choice of being taken by a policeman or of shooting him, that, much to his regret, he was compelled to use his revolver, and the policeman fell dead. An innocent man was tried for this murder, found guilty of it, and

condemned to death; but as some doubt arose with respect to an *alibi*, upon which the poor fellow had relied, his sentence was commuted into imprisonment for life. Peace's success encouraged him to further efforts, many of them being rewarded with the result that his genius deserved, till one luckless night, after a very hazardous operation, he was again interrupted; "most unfairly," he said, "for he only wanted to go away quietly."

The owner of the house—or, to quote Peace again, of "the crib that he had cracked"—surprised Mr. Peace as he was leaving the premises laden with the "swag," seized the burglar, and paid for his courage with his life. Peace was arrested, and made a full confession of this and other murders, entirely exculpating the poor man who was lingering in prison, where he had already passed more than two years. The innocent man was, of course, instantly released, receiving what the law calls "a free pardon" for a crime that he had not committed. In Peace's confession he acknowledged the justice of his doom in these words:

"Well, I am a-going to be executed, and I suppose I've no call to complain; but what I say is this, I'm going to be hung for *what I done, but never intended.*" I may close my account of Mr. Peace's career with a horribly grim joke said to have been perpetrated by one of the witnesses of his execution. The rope was round the criminal's neck, and the executioner was on the point of drawing the bolt, when the criminal exclaimed:

"Wait a bit; give me some water—just a drop."

As the words left his lips they were closed for ever.

"He asked for a *drop*," said the hardened bystander, "and he has got it."

It is a little remarkable that the penitentiary at Millbank is—like the Old Bailey—doomed to destruction, and will soon cease to be a prison. I think, therefore, that the courtyard—with its surrounding cells—which forms the *mise en scène* of my picture, precisely copied from nature as it is, may be interesting as a record of prison life at this time.

The series of "The Race for Wealth" was exhibited in King Street, St. James's, and visited by great numbers of people. The pictures were translated by photogravure, but whether from the faults of the pictures, or of the method in which they were reproduced, the result was far from satisfactory.

My summer holiday of 1879 was spent at Tenby. Though it has been my habit to insist upon enforced idleness, as regards the actual practice of my profession, for at least a month or six weeks of every year, I have neither been able, nor willing, to banish from my mind all thought of fresh material for my work; and the sight of the Welsh fishwomen with their picturesque costumes suggested subjects for a variety of pictures. It was common to see these women, with their high Welsh hats and bright petticoats, offering their wares to the visitors; bargains being struck as the ladies stood at their windows. One such scene I determined to paint, and

that picture—together with a single figure-piece—were my only contributions to the Exhibition of 1880; my principal work being shown elsewhere. After an interval of eight years I found myself again a member of the dreadful and dreaded Hanging Committee. I can say for myself, and I feel sure I can say for my colleagues, that we tried to do our "spiriting gently;" but I fear we did not escape censure for not performing impossibilities; and so long as would-be exhibitors are allowed to send in any number of pictures in the hope of one or two being selected, confusion and unintentional injustice must occur.

CHAPTER IX.

A MYSTERIOUS SITTER.

THE first fog of the season made its hated appearance early in October of the year 1853, and I had cast my despairing eyes many times up to the square patch of opaque pea-soup atmosphere that showed itself at the window of my studio, in the hope that I might discover a favourable change in its determined opposition to the practice of the fine arts, when my servant entered the room and presented me with a card.

"The gentleman is in the drawing-room, and would like to see you on particular business."

"Mr. William Rivers," said the card.

I found my visitor to be a tall, gentlemanly-looking man about thirty, who, after profuse apology for taking the liberty of calling on me, said in a strangely nervous and agitated manner that he had seen some of my works in the possession of a friend, and though they were not portraits, he hoped—that is, he feared—that though it might not be my habit to—still, perhaps I might under certain circumstances (what on earth is the man driving at? thought I) I might—I

might be induced—here the nervousness became so embarrassing that I suggested an adjournment to my painting-room, more in the hope of giving the gentleman time to collect himself than with the desire of showing him the work I had in progress. The fog had cleared sufficiently to enable my visitor to see a small picture, then on the easel, and nearly completed. I immediately found I had to do with a man who had not only a love of art, but a knowledge of its principles. But he could not talk about the little scene from "The Bride of Lammermoor" for ever; the object of his visit must be broached, and then the nervous condition took possession of him more completely than before. After an awkward silence, he said:

"It is not for myself. I have no interest—that is, I am interested for my friend Street. He lives in Nottingham—you know Nottingham? No? Ah—yes—well, she is his sister—young lady—yes, he would like you to paint her portrait." (Is this all? what is there to be nervous about? I said to myself.)

"I never paint portraits," was my reply; and I explained my reason on seeing the blank look of disappointment that the handsome face assumed. I showed him a female figure painted from a model, for which I had received a sum as large, or perhaps larger, than I could charge for a portrait of a similar size; and I told him that in painting it I had no thought about *likeness*, which in a portrait is essential. I had no one but myself to please. Artists' models are selected on account of some charm of

feature or expression—they are all, more or less, agreeable objects of contemplation; whereas the man who undertakes a portrait may be condemned to spend hour after hour in studying the ugly or the commonplace, and please nobody after all.

The stranger's face brightened as he said:

"But suppose now, for the sake of argument (*sic*)—suppose that you have a beautiful girl proposed to you, quite, I should say—yes, more so than that you have just done, and she would sit quite still, you know, and so on—suit herself to your time, and that sort of thing—in short, make herself very agreeable in every way, would you undertake to oblige my friend and—and—me?"

After a moment's pause, I said:

"Well, if the lady is what you describe, and she will fulfil the conditions you name, I will do my best to please all concerned."

"Will you? will you?" he exclaimed, in a paroxysm of agitation. "Well then, I hope, Mr. Frith, that I shall not—a—a—that my visit, I mean—that I shall be able to go to my—to Mr. Street at Nottingham, I mean—and say you consent to paint his sister. That you will agree with everybody in thinking her a lovely girl, I have no doubt at all. When can she take her first sitting?"

"Ah! by the way," said I, "I can't go to Nottingham, you know. How is that to be managed?"

"I may say," was the reply, "that my friend Street has left me *carte blanche* as to terms, so there

will be no difficulty about that; and Miss Street, she—she—oh, of course not. Nottingham? Oh no! She is in London, and will remain some months longer—at least, that is, I believe so; and I hope—a—you will find her a——"

"Where is she staying?"

"Staying—stay——" here the nervousness increased frightfully. "Her address? She lives—that is, she resides—at present she is staying—but perhaps you will be good enough not to mention my name to the lady she is with, if you please, because she does not know me, and I don't want her to hear my name in the matter of the picture—Miss Street is staying with a Mrs. Baker at present, who lives — yes — I will send you the address; and you bear in mind that my name is not to be mentioned."

"Of course you may depend on me in that respect."

"Oh, thank you! Let me see—I hope to be in Nottingham to-night...Yes, this is Thursday; Friday too late. You shall hear from me on Saturday, Mr. Frith, without fail. You will be ready for first sitting Monday, you say. Mrs. Baker's address is 501, St. John's Wood Road. Saturday without fail. Good-day. Don't trouble yourself to come to the door. Ah! it has cleared up, I see. What convenient things these hansoms are! Pray don't stand in the air without your hat. Good-day!" And Mr. Rivers, still strangely agitated, jumped into his cab, and was whirled off townwards.

After he had gone, and I thought the matter over, I did not feel comfortable about it. Why did he shrink from telling me the address, and then tell it? And why was he so nervous? Perhaps the young lady was not so pretty after all—only beautiful in *his* eyes, for he was evidently—ah! the more I thought of it the less I liked Mr. William Rivers, with his hesitating manner so like guilt, his St. John's Wood Road, and his Mrs. Baker!

However, on the Saturday morning I received a note from Mr. Rivers, telling me I might expect Miss Street and Mrs. Baker at ten o'clock on Monday; and punctually to the moment they arrived. I found Mrs. Baker to be a lady of a certain age; still handsome, portly, and of excellent manners; a little over-precise perhaps, and utterly opposed to my preconceived idea of her. I may mention here what I afterwards discovered, namely, that Mrs. Baker had formerly kept a large establishment for young ladies, and now received only two or three for the purpose of "finishing" their education, Miss Street being one of these.

I need not tell those who have done me the honour to read thus far in my reminiscences, that, unsatisfactory as the productions of my pencil may be, I am still more unfortunate when I assume the pen; and as I most certainly failed to do justice to my lovely model with my brush, I cannot hope to convey a clear idea of her with the less familiar pen. She was tall, and graceful in every movement. Her head was small, perfectly formed, with a profusion of dark

hair; her throat, like that which Anne Boleyn must have clasped with her pretty little hands when she made that cheerful remark to the headsman, white and round as—what you will, except snow or alabaster; very tender gray eyes, with long dark lashes; a straight nose, with proudly-curved nostrils; and the loveliest of lovely mouths. Every turn of her head and every change of attitude disclosed a fresh beauty; and it was anxious work to select a position which, when once chosen, had to be fixed on canvas for ever. But at last, after many turnings and twistings, and a strangled yawn or two from Mrs. Baker, an outline was made, and I set my model free; arranging for the "first painting" on the following day.

An account of the sittings would be wearisome. I knew from her sweet face she would sit well, and that she did most patiently; and when she saw me more than ordinarily dispirited and anxious, with downright failure staring me in the face and chilling me to the marrow, she would conquer all sense of fatigue, and again I saw the expression I would have given the world to catch. Mrs. Baker never came after the first visit. Miss Bloxam, a dowdy good little soul, who seemed to have all the pillow-cases in St. John's Wood to make or mend, accompanied my sitter, and was harmless and good-natured enough.

I remembered my promise to Mr. Rivers, and never mentioned his name; but Miss Street often spoke of her brother, and impressed me with the

idea that she had a deep affection for him. Sometimes I spoke of Nottingham as her home, and asked her when she expected to leave London and reside entirely with her brother; but to this inquiry, and others as to her friends in Nottinghamshire, I received short and hesitating replies. She had no present intention of leaving town, she said, and she seemed to know none of the Nottinghamshire families with whom I happened to be acquainted.

When the head of the portrait was near completion, I was doubtful as to the likeness; and though Miss Bloxam gave a favourable opinion, I thought it would be desirable to communicate directly with the lady's brother, instead of through a friend, whose acts he might subsequently disavow. I accordingly wrote such a letter to Mr. Rivers, as I thought would ensure me an answer from the principal in the affair; but the reply was from Mr. Rivers, who merely desired me to do my best, being empowered to assure me that, like or unlike, the picture was to be considered Mr. Street's. So I advanced the head still further, and Mr. Street having sent a splendid yellow satin dress from Nottingham—a dress which harmonized admirably with Miss Street's complexion—I clothed my lay figure in the gorgeous robes, and by dint of painting, now in the dark, now in the light, I finished the costume. I think it was on the day when I had put the last touches to the black lace on the dress that a lady and gentleman called—the lady an extremely elegant person, and the gentleman, whom she introduced as her brother, a

tall, handsome, soldierly-looking man with a black moustache—and after many apologies for their intrusion, asked to be allowed to see Miss Street's portrait. With all the politeness I could summon for the occasion, I declined to show the portrait until after Miss Street had given me another, and, as I hoped, a final sitting; this would take place in a few days, and if they would favour me with a call in about a fortnight, they should have their wish. Both the lady and her brother seemed to know Miss Street and Mrs. Baker very well, and the gentleman asked me if Mrs. Baker was present during the sittings. I thought he seemed pleased when I answered in the negative; but he said nothing, and they took their leave. For a fortnight after this I saw nothing of my beautiful sitter, the weather being so miserable with fog and darkness that painting at all, much less finishing, was out of the question; but on the first struggle of the sun to show himself, I betook myself to St. John's Wood Road to arrange for a sitting the next day. I found Mrs. Baker's house, and was shown into a very handsome drawing-room, where sat Mrs. Baker herself. She received me very graciously, and I told her my errand. Then she lifted her eyebrows gently, and said:

"Miss Street's portrait! Ah, I perceive, then, you have not had a visit from Mr. Street."

I told her I had never seen Mr. Street in my life.

"Dear me!" she said very placidly; "Miss Street is out of town."

"Out of town!" I exclaimed. "Why, Miss Street informed me that it was not only not probable, but that her arrangements made it impossible for her to leave London before Christmas, and——"

"No doubt; and I can quite clear Miss Street of attempting to deceive, *in this case* at any rate," said Mrs. Baker, with emphasis. "She had no idea she was about to leave London; of that I am quite sure."

"Well," said I, feeling rather bewildered, "may I ask when she is expected to return?"

"When Miss Street is expected to return here, do you mean? She is not expected to return to this house, nor would she be permitted to do so."

After this blow I was stunned, and silent for a moment. I then looked at Mrs. Baker's face, and fancied, from what I saw there, that she was brimful of something she wished to divulge, but did not know how to begin. At last she said:

"You need be under no apprehension about not being paid for the portrait; they seemed to be very anxious about it, and there is plenty of money. And Mr. Street didn't call? How odd! You have never seen Mr. Street, did you say?"

"Never," I replied, from the depths of gloom.

"May I ask—— Ah, now I remember. You are not a portrait-painter?"

"No."

"No! You undertook to paint Miss Street's portrait through the intervention of a mutual friend? Was it not so?"

My promise to Mr. Rivers flashed across me, so I said:

"Why, scarcely a mutual friend. I never saw the gentleman but once, and——"

"Not a mutual friend!" interrupted Mrs. Baker. "Deception again! Decidedly they said a mutual friend. That you didn't paint portraits, but as a special favour, you—— I am confident he was a mutual friend. What was his name?"

"His name? Well, I——"

"Was it Rivers, or Collins?"

"It was not Collins, I think; but——"

"Was it William Rivers?"

The woman thoroughly drove me into a corner. I could only say feebly that I could not take upon myself to say; that I could not tax my memory.

"I only saw the gentleman once, you know," I added artfully.

"Your memory, I fear, is not very good," said Mrs. Baker with a slight sneer. "But you have *heard* from Mr. Street?"

"No, I have not, Mrs. Baker," I said; and added with indignation, "and considering I am painting his sister's portrait, I think——"

"Nor from his friend, whose name has escaped you? Haven't you heard from the friend?"

"Yes; I have heard twice from the friend, as you call him."

"And yet," exclaimed Mrs. Baker, with frightful emphasis, "and yet you cannot recollect his name?"

There was no use in playing with such a woman, so I said at once:

"I must be candid with you; I *cannot* tell you the name of the person who called on me. I—— you understand."

"PERfectly," said Mrs. Baker, "PERfectly; nothing but deceit. I beg your pardon——?"

"I was not about to make any remark," I said, as she stopped abruptly. "I merely want to know when Miss Street will return."

This set Mrs. Baker off again. She implored me to dismiss any fear "of a pecuniary nature" from my mind. No expense had been spared with regard to the "young person;" there was evidently plenty of money. She had had singing lessons, German lessons, *riding lessons;* and as she uttered the last words Mrs. Baker went off at a tangent, and said:

"Now, Mr. Frith, you have never seen Mr. Street, and you cannot remember the name of the person who ordered you to paint the portrait; pray may I ask if you know any other friend of Miss Street's?"

I said, "No; certainly not."

Then I bethought me of the lady and gentleman who had called to see the portrait. I mentioned that visit, and described the visitors. Instantly Mrs. Baker's face flushed.

"And their names," she asked eagerly, "their names? Were they Mrs. Allen and Captain Hill?"

"Well, I am not quite certain," said I, "but I think those were the names. Do you know these

people? They seemed to take great interest in Miss Street."

"Who seemed to take great interest in her—I mean in Miss Street—Captain Hill? Yes, indeed! The *interest* Captain Hill takes in Miss Street is the cause of her not being able to sit for you to-morrow; they had taken riding lessons together, you know. Captain Hill has driven Miss Street out of town; not that she wanted to go. He is a very handsome man, you say; he may be. All I can say is, he has created a fine confusion, he and his companion plotter, the riding-master. To be candid with you, it is a stupid love-matter. Your handsome captain has fallen deeply in love with Miss Street, and she with him."

I remarked there was nothing wonderful in that.

"Perhaps not, in the event of two such persons being thrown together; but they never ought to have met. However, I have washed my hands of the whole affair. My conduct is open to the world. I have no secrets, and I lend myself, knowingly at least, to no deception."

"May I ask how this—this—attachment became known?"

"You may," said Mrs. Baker, with enormous candour, "so might anyone. As I said before, I have no secrets. Of course, Mr. Frith, being an artist, you are also a physiognomist. Now, to me, Miss Street has a face which derives one of its chief charms from its extremely *innocent* expression. Those eyes, how often have I thought that deceit

could find no home there! She was quick-tempered; she had other faults; but deceit, never. Yet, oh, dear sir, how deceitful she has proved herself! To be brief: I saw a note lying on my hall-table, addressed to Miss Street; the address was written in a hand which I did not recognise as belonging to any of her usual correspondents; it seemed to me to be a gentleman's writing disguised, and made to look like a lady's. I was suspicious, I own, and when Miss Street was sitting on that very stool, reading the note, I watched her. She had just come in from her walk, and I thought, as she sat on that low stool, I had never seen a more innocent-looking, pretty creature. Do you know, I was almost ashamed of my suspicions, when I saw a faint blush on her face; it might have been fancy. She rose and left the room. After an absence of a minute or two she came back, and with that artless manner—you know her way—she said:

"'Mrs. Baker, would you like to know the contents of the note I was reading?'

"My reply was: 'Clara, my love, I have perfect confidence in you; you would receive a note from no one of whom I should disapprove. At the same time, if you wish to tell me what the note contained, I can have no objection.'

"'Oh, I should like to tell you, for you might assist us,' said she; 'it is from an old schoolfellow of mine, poor Annie Featherstone. We were such friends, Mrs. Baker; and now her father has been speculating and lost everything in Pennsylvanian

Bonds; the family is quite reduced in circumstances, and poor dear Annie is obliged to go out as a governess—and she such a proud girl! it will be a sad blow. She has written to know if I can get her a situation.' That, Mr. Frith, was Miss Street's story, and I believed it. I was too credulous, for the story was false from the beginning to the end. The note came from Captain Hill."

"Good gracious!" I exclaimed. "How did you discover that?"

"It is, perhaps, not necessary," Mrs. Baker replied in a dignified tone of reserve, "to enter into the means I took to discover the correspondence. I DID discover it, and I collected the letters and sent them to her brother."

"Well, but," said I, "perhaps the captain may be a good match for Miss Street; and if so, though the introduction may be what we could not approve exactly, why should Mr. Street object?"

On this point Mrs. Baker was very clear.

"Mr. Street does object," she said; "that is very plain. And if you had witnessed the scene that took place in this room, you would have been as much puzzled to understand Mr. Street as I was. Never did I see a man so agitated; in fact, he could scarcely control himself. He arrived very early in the morning: we had not left our rooms. Miss Street declared she would not leave London. She seemed to have a strange repugnance to accompany her brother—she would follow him to-morrow—in a day or two—he could trust her, she supposed?—and

so on. At last I felt obliged to say, 'Clara, my love, you forget this is my house; and I regret to have to tell you that after the terrible way in which you have deceived me, there is no longer a home for you here. We must part, if you please.' I really felt for her, poor girl, she cried so; but then you know the dreadful story she told me, Mr. Frith!"

I was struck with an idea. "Pray, Mrs. Baker, what is Mr. Street like?"

Mrs. Baker immediately described a gentleman who would pass admirably for Mr. William Rivers.

"Come," thought I, "this is really mysterious;" and I asked Mrs. Baker to show me some of Mr. Street's handwriting. "The cover of one of his notes would do."

"By all means," said the lady, opening a small drawer in the table near her. "Here is the last letter I received from him. Oh, open it, open it; I wish for no concealment. I have no secrets."

The penmanship was strange to me; certainly not that of Rivers.

"This is Mr. Street's writing, is it?" I asked.

"I suppose so," was the reply; "but it is singularly unlike his usual penmanship. It is evidently written in great agitation, you see."

"May I see the ordinary writing?" I asked.

"Certainly. I will fetch you one of his letters;" and Mrs. Baker left the room.

During her absence I read the note again carefully, and on her return I said:

"Why, Mrs. Baker, I see no address. I was

about to ask you for Mr. Street's address, as I wish, under the circumstances, to write to him."

"Post-office, Nottingham," said Mrs. Baker.

"Post-office, Nottingham!" I exclaimed. "Why, that is no address at all. Mr. Street surely doesn't keep a post-office!"

"That is the only address I have ever known," commenced the lady; but I, astonished out of my good manners, interrupted:

"And do you take a young lady into your house who gives no address beyond a post-office?"

Mrs. Baker was not offended in the least.

"Sir, your remark is natural and proper. I made every inquiry about Miss Street. There is a well-known family in Nottingham of that name; and I was assured, in reply to my searching questions, that I should be perfectly safe in receiving any member of the Street family. The name of Street had been well selected, or the young lady's name may really be Street, only she does not belong to the well-known family of that name. Here is one of Mr. Street's letters in his usual hand."

William Rivers, by all that is curious! "Oh! this is the other. Well, it is very unlike the last," said I.

"I attribute the difference to the agitation of the writer," said Mrs. Baker. "You see the writing in the first letter is tremulous and ill-formed."

"Well," said I, looking at the penmanship, and thoroughly convincing myself it was the work of Rivers, "I am really ashamed to have occupied your time so long."

"Pray don't name that. It is my desire, as I have had the pleasure of telling you very often, to have no useless concealment. I feel that there is a degree of mystery surrounding Miss Street that ought not to surround any young woman. For my part, I hate mysteries. I always find something that requires to be hidden at the bottom of a mystery. But I feel sure you will soon know Miss Street's true address, for they are very anxious about the portrait; and as to money, there is no lack of that."

Thereupon I took my leave, and went ruminating westwards.

It was a strange affair this: a lovely girl, with her strange lover, strange brother, mysterious friend, and address at a post-office!

I was not kept long in suspense, for two days after my interview with Mrs. Baker I received a letter from Miss Street, announcing her regret at having had to leave London unexpectedly, and her intention of coming up to town one day in the following week. The letter came from Elm Tree House, Alfrington, near Nottingham. So I had an address at last, and I was chuckling over it, when Captain Hill and his sister were announced. They came professedly to see the portrait; but they had not been in my studio five minutes before I discovered that their chief object was to extract from me any information I might possess about my mysterious sitter.

I taxed my visitors with this, and they confessed it so frankly that I told them all I knew—which was

little enough—and ended by giving them the address I had just received.

The captain seized the letter, eagerly scanned the address—which he copied—and declared his intention of starting at once for Alfrington, his object being, as he coolly informed me, to see the young lady's brother, declare his passion, and take his chance.

I agreed with his views, wished him success, and we parted capital friends, after his promise to let me know the result of his mission on his return.

Two or three days after this I received a second note from Miss Street, deferring her visit for another week; and it was not long after that time when, on returning from my afternoon walk, I was told that a gentleman was waiting for me in my drawing-room. There, bending over the fire, his chin resting on his hand, looking pale and worn, I found Captain Hill.

He apologized for intruding upon me, pleading as his excuse, my being the only person he knew who took any interest in Miss Street.

I reassured him, and asked what success had attended his search.

"None," he said; "the mystery is as great as ever."

"But surely," said I, "you have seen her or her brother? You went, did you not, to their house?"

"It is a long story," he said, smiling feebly; "but such a strange one that you *must* hear it. I left London by the mail train in the evening of the day I last saw you here—the day you replied to Miss Street's note; indeed I accompanied your letter, for I

went by the train that conveyed it—and next morning I found myself in Alfrington. Alfrington is the beau-ideal of an old English village: little gable-ended cottages, the church overgrown with ivy, and all that sort of thing—quite rural, you know. I put up at an old inn, with a landlord to match, a Boniface of the old school, and quite as slow. He waited upon me when I was getting my breakfast, and by way of saying something, I asked him if the Street family, or any of them, ever paid him a visit. I thought, perhaps the inn might be their property.

"'What name, sir? The name of Street? No, sir, I never heard the name myself—never know'd anybody of that name come here, sir.'

"'Well, but you know of the Street family who live near this place, don't you?'

"'Street family? Never heard of a family by that name about these parts. No, sir.'

"I finished my breakfast without any further attempt upon my landlord.

"It struck me that the best place for inquiry would be the post-office, and to that place I was going, when I overtook a man who looked so like a postman that I asked him if he was not that functionary.

"'Yes, I am, sir; the only one here, and have been for a good bit.'

"Very oddly the people talk there; really difficult to understand at times.

"'Well, then,' said I, 'will you be so good as tell me whereabouts Elm Tree House is? You know it, no doubt.'

"'Helm Tree Hoose, sir?' (he called 'house,' *hoose*). 'Can't say I do; and I know all the houses about these parts pretty well, too.'

"'Elm Tree House, near Alfrington,' said I, speaking each word very slowly. 'This is Alfrington, is it not?'

"'Oh yes, sir,' he said, laughing, 'this is Alfrington, sure enough; but there is no house by that name as you speak of near Alfrington, I know.'

"'The devil there isn't! Why, a friend of mine receives letters from Elm Tree House, and replies to them; in fact, is in correspondence with a person at Elm Tree House; and this very mail has brought one from London to that address, to my certain knowledge. What do you say to that?'

"'Well, sir—excuse the joke, but I wish they may get it, sir. Excuse me laughing, sir; no offence. I shall have to deliver it at a place that I never heerd on, though I have been postman here nigh twenty years.'

"'Ah, well; thank you. Do you know the family of—— Oh, never mind. Will you kindly direct me to the post-office?'

"'To be sure, sir. There you are, sir, that little shop with the old-fashioned window—that bow-window like—just where that old woman's a-passing. Good-day, sir.'

"Now, do you know, Mr. Frith, I really did begin to think it very strange that neither from my landlord nor from the postman—who, of all men, ought to have known the house from which Miss Street had

undoubtedly written to you—could I get the least information; and, in grave doubts as to what I should do next if the postmaster failed me, I made my way to the little shop which also did duty as post-office. A man behind the counter was sorting letters as I entered; indeed, I thought I saw yours amongst them, and I was not mistaken.

"'I beg your pardon,' said I; 'I thought you would be sure to be able to direct me to a place I am anxious to find. Will you be so kind as tell me where Elm Tree House is, somewhere close to this village?'

"'Elm Tree House,' said the man very slowly; 'I don't know any house of that name near here. There is no such place near here, sir.'

"'No house of that name!' exclaimed I, now really perplexed.

"'No, sir; and here is a letter addressed to Elm Tree House' (showing the one you had written) 'from London, you see, sir. It's a rum thing, this is. I can't make it out, no more can't my missis.'

"'What do you mean you can't make out?' said I.

"'Why, you see, sir, there aren't such a place as Elm Tree House. It's a fictious address, that is; but I had a letter myself about this here one, so I knowed it was a-coming.'

"'Oh, you knew it was coming; you knew it would come by this post to-day?'

"'Yes; oh yes, we knowed it was coming. But it's a rum thing; we aren't used to them kind of tricks here.'

"'What sort of tricks? What on earth do you mean?'

"'Why, sir, I call it very queer when I get a letter, with no name signed to it, to tell me a letter will come from London, directed to a place *when there aren't no such place.* I call that very rum, I do.'

"'Well,' said I, 'and what are you going to do with the letter now you have got it? You can't deliver it, that is very clear.'

"'No, sir, we ain't got to deliver it. It's to be fetched; it's to wait till called for.'

"'And who is to call for it, pray?'

"'Ah, that's more than I can tell, sir. Him as wrote the letter with no name to it, I suppose.'

"'Now, I'll tell you what, my man. I am very anxious to see who fetches this letter. It will be called for presently, no doubt. Have you any objection to allow me to wait—there, in that back-room? Through the glass-door, I can see from behind that little curtain.'

"The man entered at once into what seemed to him a capital joke, and with alacrity he ushered me into a small, close-smelling parlour.

"'There, sir; you are welcome to sit here as long as you please; you'll disturb nobody. Me and my missis is not troubled with a family, so there will be nothing to disturb you neither.'

"'Thank you,' said I, as he handed me a chair; 'you must let me give you this for your trouble.'

"'Oh no, sir, thank you, sir; but there is no occasion for that' (pocketing the money). 'You are

welcome, I'm sure, sir—very welcome. You won't have to wait long, sir; and if you just raise the corner of the blind, like that, you can see anybody that comes into the shop. You won't have long to wait, I dare say.'

"But I had to wait long—very long. And I was sometimes tempted to wish the people had been blessed with a family. A romp with children would have beguiled the time better, at any rate, than the talk of the 'missis,' which related almost entirely to the high price of provisions. The master made his appearance constantly, with ever-varying expressions of astonishment at the non-appearance of a claimant for the letter, now and again bringing a drum of figs, and enticing me to soothe my impatience with one of the finest figs that had ever entered his shop. Will you believe that I watched at intervals in that back-parlour from Friday morning till the following Tuesday, and no one came for your letter? And do you know that I believe I might have remained watching till the present moment, and have watched in vain? It was known I was there, I feel no doubt about that. At length, tired out, I left for Lincoln, after giving the postmaster my address, and begging him to let me know instantly if the letter was fetched. In the evening of the day of my arrival at Lincoln, I got this letter from the Alfrington postmaster:

"'SIR,

"'You had not been gone from our house half an hour, when a party came and asked for the

letter. It was a man—a gentleman—a tall party—a stranger. Not having seen him in Alfrington before.

"'I am, sir,

"'Your humble servant,

"'H. GREEN (Post-office).'

"This letter reached me at Lincoln, as I told you, and you may imagine my state of mind after reading it. I was quite at a loss how to proceed. My Lincoln friends were Nottingham people, who had lived in that town for many years, having removed to Lincoln quite recently. I told them my story, and succeeded in interesting the head of the family—a shrewd man of the world enough—who, after convincing himself and me that no such family as the Streets, and no such place as Elm Tree House, existed in the neighbourhood of Nottingham, suggested that I should write a letter to Mr. Street to the address—the only address—he had given to Mrs. Baker, namely, Post-office, Nottingham, explaining my feelings towards his sister, and my intentions also; appealing to him as a gentleman to reply to me, and explain the mystery that seemed to surround his sister. I begged him to tell me if her hand were free; and if it should not be free, I should expect that my letters would be returned to me.

"The letter was written and immediately despatched, and by return of post I received the following reply:

"'SIR,

"'I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter. I am at a loss to conceive how any person calling himself a gentleman could have acted as I find you have done. I consider your conduct in addressing a young lady, living, as my sister was, under the protection of Mrs. Baker, without first ascertaining whether your attentions were approved by that lady, not to say by Miss Street's relatives, dishonourable in the extreme. You have already caused deep pain and anxiety to Miss Street's friends; and to put a stop to any further attempts, I have to inform you that my sister's *hand and affections are already engaged.* As to the explanation of what you are pleased to term a "a mystery," I am at a loss to understand what you mean. This is the first time that such a term has been applied to what concerns my family.

"'I am, sir,

"'Your obedient servant,

"'B. STREET.

"'Captain Hill, etc.

"'P.S.—I return your letters.'

"Here, my dear Mr. Frith," said Captain Hill, "ends all I can learn about the Street family. With respect to Mr. Street's amiable epistle, and his assertion that his sister's affections 'are already engaged,' all I have to say is that I will not rest till I hear the truth, or falsehood, of that from the young lady herself."

"And how do you propose to manage to do so?" asked I; "for after the letter you have just shown me.

signed by Mr. Street, who declares himself to be the young lady's brother, it must be obvious to you that I cannot lend myself to an assignation here."

"The lady's brother!" exclaimed the captain. "The man is no more the lady's brother than I am. I suspect him to be—no matter what—one who detains her—one who has some power over her that he exercises against her consent. After what has taken place between me and Miss Street, I am confident that if her affections are engaged at all, they are engaged to me. Even in my sister's presence she——but why should I bore you with all this? I can feel with you that you cannot permit of our meeting here, but you can have no objection to tell me when she is to sit for her picture again?"

"I have heard it said," replied I, "that 'all is fair in love and war.' I demur to the aphorism; and unless you will give me your word that you will not attempt to see Miss Street in this house, I will seal my lips about her sitting, and about anything I may learn of her in the future."

The captain rose, and paced the room in great agitation. After awhile he said:

"I give you my word that I will not enter your house while Miss Street is in it. Will that do?"

"Yes. She sits to-morrow."

"And the time?"

I shook my head.

"Ah, well, you are very cautious. You are right, no doubt. All that remains for me to say is in the form of warmest thanks to you for listening so

patiently to my troubles. The issue of them, which can't be far off, you shall know!"

So saying, Captain Hill rose to go. I rang for my servant, who speedily appeared, and conducted my visitor down the steps to my front-gate.

Why this delay, O Susan, my servant? What can the gallant captain have to say to you? Can that be a note I saw you put into your pocket as you came smiling up the steps?

Miss Street came the next morning according to her promise, but scarcely recognisable as the same girl; her colour replaced by a dead pallor, her spirits gone, and her health seemingly broken. Her eyes constantly filled with tears, and she was moody and abstracted. In reply to my inquiries, she said her brother was not with her. She was staying at Blank's hotel in Albemarle Street with Mrs. Golden, the lady who accompanied her, and she intended to return to Alfrington at the end of the week. She made one or two attempts to resume her former cheerfulness, but failed dismally; and the result as regards her portrait was unfortunate, for I felt that the last sitting was damaging in all respects; but when she returned from putting on cloak and bonnet in the bedroom (whither she had been taken by my housemaid, Susan, Mrs. Golden remaining with me), a perfect change had taken place. There were the old radiant manner, and the winning smile.

O Susan, faithless domestic, you are the cause of this transfiguration!

"Susan," said I, "you have given Miss Street a letter from Captain Hill!"

"Yes, sir. She asked me if I hadn't had one give me by the gentleman. I said yes, and I give it to her."

"Indeed, you are a pretty—— And what did she do with it, pray?"

"Oh, sir," said the girl, "she was like a mad thing. She kissed the letter all over, and hid it in her gownd."

The rest of the story of my mysterious model may be told in Captain Hill's words, as well as I can remember them. He had discovered—probably guessed—that Mr. Street and Mr. William Rivers were one and the same person. He had also found out Miss Street's address in Albemarle Street, and to Blank's hotel he betook himself.

"I asked for Miss Street's rooms," said the captain, "and was shown upstairs. A gentleman was writing at a table. He rose as I entered, and took my card from the waiter. He was the tall, handsome person you describe Mr. Rivers to be, and when he had read my name he turned upon me, his face absolutely livid, and in a voice quivering with passion, he said, 'What is the meaning of this visit? I have nothing to say to you. These are my private rooms.' Then looking again at my card, he continued, 'You are the man who has been pestering Miss Street with your detestable addresses. I must insist on your leaving this room.'

"'Not till I have had some explanation of your position as regards Miss Street. You are, I presume, Mr. William Rivers, or Mr. Street, or whatever you choose to call yourself. Miss Street is of age, and even if you be her brother, which I take leave to

doubt, you will have to convince me of your right to control her inclinations before I will leave your room.'

"'Sir,' said he, 'I altogether dispute your right to question me. I see by your card that you are the person who wrote an avowal of most ungentlemanly conduct, and I answered you; if you have come here in person on the same errand, you will receive, *vivâ voce*, the same response.'

"This was said in a tone of suppressed passion. I felt my own passion rising as I replied:

"'Before I can accept *your* decision in this matter, I will be satisfied with respect to your relations with Miss Street, and your right of answering in her name.'

"'My—my relations with Miss Street!' exclaimed Rivers (Rivers he was, I felt sure). Then, after a pause of some moments, in which he succeeded in assuming a calmer manner, he said, 'Will you be satisfied—will you pledge your honour to cease this persecution, if your hear the lady's determination from her own lips?'

"'If it prove unfavourable to me,' said I, 'I will never trouble her or you again.'

"'This you declare upon your honour?'

"'Upon my honour.'

"Mr. Rivers, *alias* Street, went to an inner door, opened it gently, and called 'Clara!' There was no response. In the dead stillness the beating of my heart was painful. Presently the door was pushed back, and Miss Street entered the room. Traces of recent tears were on her cheeks; she turned deadly pale on seeing me, and leant upon a chair for support.

"'You know this gentleman? He is desirous to hear from your own lips that the letter I had occasion to write to him—declining, on your behalf, to accept his addresses on the ground of your affections being already engaged—was written with your sanction and approval.'

"A flood of tears was the only reply.

"'Pray speak, Clara. Are you, or are you not, promised to me? Do you, or do you not, owe everything to me—your education, your position in the world, your——'

"'Yes,' she interrupted, 'I owe you all you say, and' (with a look at me that will remain with me as long as I live) 'I cannot marry anyone but you; and if I cannot feel the love I ought, I can be grateful, and will always try to be a good wife.'

"'There, sir; there, you hear—why, the girl is about to faint! Go, sir, go! You have had your answer.'"

Captain Hill never married. His regiment went to India, and I read the captain's name in a list of the severely wounded, after one of the frequent battles during the Mutiny. Whether he died or recovered from his sword and love wounds I never knew; nor did I ever hear more of the fate and fortune of my mysterious model.*

* I told the story related above to a friend many years ago, and it was published by him in a number of *Temple Bar* in the year 1860. My friend put what Sir Walter Scott called "a cockit-hat" upon it, in the form of a dramatic ending which truth compels me to say existed only in my friend's imagination. The facts, interesting or not, occurred just as I have related them.

CHAPTER X.

JOHN FORSTER AND THE PORTRAIT OF CHARLES DICKENS.

JOHN FORSTER, author and journalist, was the intimate friend of Charles Dickens. On casual acquaintances Forster's brusque manner produced a very unfavourable impression ; but when he became better known it was evident enough that the rough exterior concealed a generous heart, as well as a refined mind. I think it was in 1854 that I first made Forster's acquaintance in a call he made upon me to ask me to paint a portrait of Dickens for him. To this I gladly assented, and something was said (but nothing definite) about fifty pounds as the sum to be paid for the picture, and I professed myself ready to begin at any time. A few weeks passed, and I began to think that either Dickens had declined to sit, or that Forster had broken his engagement, when the latter came to me in trepidation. Dickens had started a moustache, and horrified his friend. The portrait must wait ; the summer must pass away, and the moustache with it. Four years passed, but the moustache remained. The disfigurement, according to Forster, increased by a beard, which almost

covered the chin. The great author was, as I have already said elsewhere, deaf to all appeals. "The beard saved him the trouble of shaving, and much as he admired his own appearance before he allowed his beard to grow, he admired it much more now, and never neglected, when an opportunity offered, to gaze his fill at himself. If his friends didn't like his looks, he was not at all anxious for them to waste their time in studying them; and as to Frith, he would surely prefer to save himself the trouble of painting features which were so difficult as a mouth and a chin. Besides, he had been told by some of his friends that they highly approved of the change, because they now saw less of him."

I think the following letters will interest, as showing the writer's strong desire that a satisfactory portrait of Dickens should remain when all connected with it have passed away. I desire their publication very earnestly, because they show Forster's true character, that of a liberal, unselfish, and amiable man, too generously appreciative of, and far too complimentary to, my own share in the Dickens portrait:

"46, Montagu Square, W.
"March 29th, 1859.

"MY DEAR FRITH,

"My wife, who has the double purpose of seeing Mrs. Frith and the picture, will go to Pembridge Villas to-day—as I believe—and whether *you* are at home or not. Therefore, she expects to be permitted to see it, *and* Mrs. Frith.

"For myself, I never doubted your perfect success

from the first moment I saw the canvas. The picture is, indeed, all I wished—more than I dared to hope—because I know what a ticklish thing a likeness is, and how portraits, otherwise admirable, fail often in that without which all other merits must fall short. I most sincerely thank you for all the kind exertions you have made, for all the conscientious pains and labour you have given.

"I was about to write, when I had your letter, to ask you to be so kind as to tell me the price in which I am indebted to you for the picture. When that is settled, I am glad to think that I shall still remain your debtor, for that zeal, and care, and interest which I cannot repay. You will, I am sure, kindly let me know as to this.

"I fear you will think me churlish, but, though I cannot go into the reasons now, I shall hope hereafter that I may be so fortunate as to convince you that my reasons are not very selfish, for not wishing or proposing that the portrait should be engraved. I should grieve indeed if this involved anything contrary to a wish you have formed. Indeed, I think my reasons, good as I think them, could hardly be held against that.

"As to the other subject of your note, I will make immediate inquiry as to that. I know the Lord Mayor and some of the Aldermen very well. But I'll write further as to that. Forgive great haste now. (I'll call before the picture goes in.)

"Ever, my dear Frith, most sincerely yours,

"JOHN FORSTER."

"46, Montagu Square, W.
"April 8, 1859.

"MY DEAR FRITH,

"I found your letter, dated the 5th, on my table in Whitehall Place yesterday morning. I had already written to you (on Wednesday) of the great pleasure the completed picture gave me. I saw it on Saturday afternoon, when I left a special message for you; but I had no card with me, and doubtless your servant forgot to tell you I had called.

"What you say of the interest expressed in the portrait does not in the least surprise me. I knew always that such would be the effect of a successful likeness, by such a painter as yourself, of a man so popular as Dickens; and as frankly I will say to you, that I have ever regarded the interest so likely to be inspired by this portrait, not as a matter in which strangers were to be permitted to speculate, but as a part of the property or possession to which my old friendship with Dickens entitled me, when the time for redemption of his old promise to sit for me, so often renewed and so long waited for, should arrive. Assuming that I am warranted in saying (for confirmation or disproof of which you will naturally refer to himself) that Dickens so consented to sit as a special favour to me, I hope that, without any particular selfishness, I may venture, in so far as this portrait is concerned, to put forward some claim to share in that origination or invention of the subject which in effect constitutes its 'copyright.'

"You will at the same time do me the justice to

admit, that in this or any other respect I have had no concealment from you. I felt that such a question might arise; and I asked Dickens, if the opportunity presented itself to him, to express to you unreservedly my objection to having the portrait engraved. I was also specially anxious that this should be clearly conveyed to you, *before* you were requested to fix the price of the picture. For, of course, I threw over altogether what had passed upon that part of the subject (through our friend Egg) when you first undertook the portrait, four years ago; and I endeavoured, as plainly as I might, in writing the other day to ask you to name the price, to imply that the sum to be stated should exclude ulterior arrangements as to copyright.

"Most desirous have I also been to make it clear to you that I sought no pecuniary or speculative advantage for myself in all this—that, in fact, I had made such a disposition of the picture, after my death, as precluded any such possibility now or at any future time. I have bequeathed the portrait to the National Collection, as (thinking it might not displease you to know so much) I told you that it was my intention to do before you began to paint it.

"I did not mean to detain you so long with matter so strictly personal. But I should grieve indeed if you thought I had not behaved throughout with perfect candour, as well as fairly and justly. Retaining the views I have held and stated all along, I have no alternative but to adhere to my objection in

the matter of the engraving; but I will give you for the portrait (it being understood that it comes to me direct from the Academy) double the sum you have asked in your letter of the 5th—namely, three hundred guineas. And I have only to add that this arrangement will be quite satisfactory to me—that it will leave me grateful to you for all the pains and care you have taken, and that I shall continue to consider myself, with every feeling of admiration and regard, your debtor in a transaction with which I shall never associate any but the most pleasant remembrances.

"Will you give me a line in reply, kindly confirming this arrangement? and believe me,

"My dear Frith,

"Most sincerely yours,

"JOHN FORSTER."

"46, Montagu Square, W.

"Monday, April 11th, '59.

"MY DEAR FRITH,

"I enclose a cheque for a hundred and fifty guineas, and will send you another similar cheque (for same amount) in July. If the delay in the latter payment, however, should be in the least degree inconvenient to you, *pray do not scruple to say so*, and (without any real inconvenience to myself) you shall have it next month.

"Perhaps, in sending two lines of acknowledgment as to safe receipt of enclosed, you will kindly express that it is the first half of the sum of, etc.,

etc., in payment for the Dickens portrait and copyright. We do not want any such memorandum for ourselves, but it is well to save others from any possible misunderstanding.

"Yours, my dear Frith,

"Always most truly,

"JOHN FORSTER."

"46, Montagu Square, W.

"May 3rd, 1859.

"MY DEAR FRITH,

"A great pressure has been put upon me by some friends—particularly Mr. Macready, who has been very urgent indeed with his remonstrances—in the matter of permitting the Dickens picture to be engraved.

"Upon the whole, I do not feel, therefore, that I have been quite right in the tone I took, and I am content to withdraw the objection I formerly expressed.

"The only condition I should hope I may be able to make, would be to impose a certain ascertained and definite limit of time for the engraver to return me the picture in.

"Will you be kind enough, then, to make the necessary arrangements?

"I need hardly, of course, say, that whatever is given by the publisher beyond the 150 offered by me for the copyright, I shall be rejoiced to think that you will obtain.

"Believe me ever,

"Most truly yours,

"JOHN FORSTER."

"46, Montagu Square, W.
"Friday Night, 6th May, '59.

"MY DEAR FRITH,

"I am glad you are pleased, because that helps me through the difficulty I still felt. I yielded to others—not to any conviction of my own. And as 'Hudibras' says of the man convinced against his will, I remain naturally of my own opinion still. But I saw that it might hereafter be fairly made matter of reproach to me, and that, as I should probably have to yield some day, it was better to do so in the first freshness of the picture, and when the person best entitled to profit by the arrangement—yourself—would have the opportunity of doing so. And in this you have the whole truth of the case.

"I earnestly hope that it will be limited decisively to the twelve months, and as I think I have some knowledge of Mr. Barlow, as an obliging and gentlemanly man, as well as a most skilful engraver, I shall propose some early meeting between him and you and myself, with a view to an arrangement of periods most suitable and satisfactory to us all. I should be glad if he could so arrange as to be ready for the picture when it leaves the Academy, and take his first look at it then. But, of course, his time must be studied as well as mine.

"Will you kindly direct that the frame-maker send me his bill?

"And as Dickens dines quietly here on Monday next at half-past six, and I have just written off to

ask Egg, I shall be very glad indeed if you happen to be disengaged and can come also. Only ourselves.

"Always most truly yours,

"JOHN FORSTER."

CHAPTER XI.

SECOND VISIT TO THE LOW COUNTRIES.

I DERIVED so much pleasure, and, I fancy, improvement, from my visit to Holland in 1850, that I determined to pay the Low Countries a second visit, and that resolution was now to be carried out. I had just suffered a heavy domestic bereavement, and a change for my daughters as well as for myself became very desirable. We therefore took ship for Belgium on an early day in May, and, with a rapidity that would have astonished our forebears, arrived in Brussels. I had never seen the Wiertz collection, said to be the work of a madman, and familiar no doubt to many of my readers. The sight of Wiertz's pictures is enough to convince one of the truth of Dryden's lines :

> "Great wits are sure to madness near allied,
> And thin partitions do their bounds divide."

In the case of this brilliant man the thin partition had given way—at intervals only, I think. At the

end of his gallery there is a magnificent composition worthy of Rubens—a Last Judgment, Fall of the Damned, or some such thing—splendid in drawing, colouring, and composition. Other works no doubt disclose a "mind o'erthrown"—people struggling to release themselves from coffins, blowing off their heads, and otherwise indulging in mad freaks.

The visit to Wertz was a sad one to me, convincing me, as it did, that but for the inscrutable missing of one link in the intellectual chain, the artist might have added his name to the roll of the great painters of the world.

The great gallery at Brussels does not contain much to reward the painter-visitor. The Rubens pictures are not of his best, always excepting the Crucifixion, in which masterly drawing and splendid colour vie with each other. The figure of the Saviour, flanked by the thieves, is admirable; but the writhing body of the impenitent thief—whose roar of agony can almost be heard as cruel blows fall upon him—is beyond admiration, equal as it is to the best work of the great master. From my recollection of the Hague and its great collections, I was so eager to see if a second visit would confirm my favourable impression of the first, that I hurried away from Brussels, and arrived in lovely weather at a place which must be a delight to all who visit it, whether they are picture-lovers or not. Our hotel *gave*, as they call it, on to a park with deer almost up to the door, and such walks!—miles of avenues like cathedral aisles, with trees for columns, and inter-

weaving branches overhead for Gothic roof-work; and the gallery containing the finest work of the Dutch School! I spent hours with Rembrândt, Jan Stein, Teniers, Ostade, Cuyp, Franz Hals, and other immortals—wondering, ever wondering, that in no country in the world could we now match these men. Religion did not inspire them: some of their finest works were produced in troublous times, when civil broil or foreign levy distracted their country; some, stranger still, when the painters were mere boys. Paul Potter, whose bull is a masterpiece of world-wide fame, died at the age of nine-and-twenty. Rembrandt's famous dissecting picture was finished before he was twenty-six. These things were done at a time of life at which our youths are still struggling with the antique in the Academy Schools. I must, however, claim for the modern artist that he is placed at a terrible disadvantage when compared with the painters of the Dutch School—in respect of the life that is always before him. Let my reader make a mental comparison between a group of bank-holiday-makers disporting themselves on Hampstead Heath, and an array of peasantry in a picture by Teniers or Jan Stein—the former either dirty, or primly smug, but in form and colour eminently unpicturesque; the latter gay, with bright colours and dresses that call aloud to be painted. Some of our painters, feeling this so strongly, hurry off to Spain and Venice, with the happy result that we see in the works of my friends Fildes, Woods, and Burgess. But, admirable as the works of these men are, their pro-

ducers would be the last to admit that they were on a level with their brethren of old. At the Hague we found Millais, to my great satisfaction, and it was delightful to hear his fresh and frank appreciation of those great masters.

We went to see the collection belonging to a Count somebody or something, where were a few fine things and much rubbish—strange mixture. One would think the full appreciation of the one would ensure the exclusion of the other; but "'tis ever thus" in private galleries, and more than it should be in public ones. Millais and his friends went with us to Amsterdam. Unfortunately the magnificent collection at that place was housed in small, ill-lighted rooms, since changed for appropriate galleries. Opposite to each other were Rembrandt's "Night Watch" and Van der Helst's famous "Meeting of Burghers of the Archers' Guild," each in its way a masterpiece; though I confess I have seen many pictures by Rembrandt that I prefer to this large work. The figures are all ill-drawn, and out of proportion, and the light and shadow are somewhat artificial; the people are illumined by something that resembles neither day nor lamp-light, and the picture seemed to me to suffer in comparison with the absolute reality and truth of the Van der Helst, every figure in which work is marked with the strongest individuality—a bright, clear day-light pervading the crowd of figures; each taking its place, and painted with a vigour and completeness that makes this one of the great pictures of the world.

Then the delightful examples that meet you, in every part of the rooms, of all the marvellous Dutchmen! Franz Halls sits like a living man in a garden with his wife, whose sweet face smiles at you with an evanescent expression that you expect will change as you look.

At Haarlem there is a gallery filled with pictures by this man (who lived to a great age, and worked till the end of it), which greatly resemble the style of Millais. All these works represent companies of his countrymen, jovial gatherings, military assemblies, parochial meetings, and the like; their value resting—after the splendid dash and brilliancy of the execution—on their absolute truth; a quality, I think, unattainable except under similar conditions.

The Six family, whose burgomaster ancestor was the friend and patron of Rembrandt, still exists at Amsterdam. I had heard that the house inhabited by the present Six contained many examples of the great Dutchman, but that they were difficult of access. I therefore armed myself with an introduction, kindly given me by Tadema, and wended my way to the family mansion, an unpretending house close to one of the canals. Over a bell by the front-door was the name of Six, in small black letters. I was admitted, and shown into a room which, but for a few modern appliances, is exactly in the condition in which Rembrandt so often visited it. His pictures hang on the walls in their original black frames, and amongst them is a wonderful head of the burgomaster; the portrait

finished except the hands. I was told that a dispute with the patron had occurred during the progress of the likeness, and the irate painter had refused to complete his work. Whether that was so or not, the picture remains to us, a marvel and a delight for all time.

CHAPTER XII.

THE DOCTOR'S STORY.

MESSRS. EDWARD AND WILLIAM FINDEN were engravers of considerable reputation forty years ago. William, the younger, produced some exquisite book-plates, and others of more importance. The smaller prints appeared in the "Annuals" which were so popular during the first quarter of the century and far into the second. They were legion — the "Book of Gems" being perhaps the best and most popular. After a long reign, the public wearied of them, and one after another they ceased to exist. The Findens, Heath, and other "Annual" publishers, found the necessity of catering for their many readers in other forms. Heath hit upon the "Book of Beauty," with Lady Blessington as editor of it. The contents consisted of short stories and poems of unequal merit, and many of the beauties of London were pressed into the service, and figured as beauties—a claim, judging from some specimens, to which they had no right whatever. The Findens' venture was in the form of a series of female heads, in oval shape, from Moore's poems,

and the title fixed upon was "The Beauties of Moore." A number of young artists living in intimate intercourse—myself, Egg, Elmore, Ward, and others—agreed to contribute. The sums we received for each picture varied from ten to fifteen pounds. "Lesbia," "Norah Creina," "Wicked Eyes" and "Holy Eyes," and many more, fell to me—so many, indeed, that I used up all the pretty models, and any of my well-favoured friends that I could persuade to sit. "Holy Eyes" became a great difficulty. None of our models had features or expressions that could help one to realize Moore's beautiful lines:

"Some looks there are so holy,
They seem but given
As shining beacons solely
To light to Heaven."

Nor could I discover amongst my acquaintances a form that would assist me. On telling a friend of my difficulty, he said, "I think I can introduce you to a young lady who would be exactly what you want."

My friend, who was, and had long been, an invalid, then told me that his doctor, a man named Rose, in very fair practice, had recently married a young and beautiful girl.

"They are both coming to dine with me," said he. "Come and meet them, and then if you find the lady won't do, nothing need be said. If, on the contrary, you find that I am right in my judgment of her, I think I can promise that Rose will only be too pleased to let her sit."

On the appointed day, I put in an early appearance; and never can I forget, if subsequent and fearful events had failed to fix themselves upon my memory, the vision of exquisite loveliness that appeared, leaning on the arm of a somewhat saturnine-looking man considerably older than herself. Anything nearer to the complete ideal of female loveliness it would be impossible to conceive.

She was tall, of a perfect figure. Her features recalled the most beautiful of the antique statues; the statuesque perfection of her form was inspired by an expression I could not paint, and cannot describe beyond saying that it was like that we find in the angels of Botticelli—purity and holiness combined; and if, as I for one believe, the face is the index of the mind, then that mind should have been one that no mean, sordid, or sensual thought could enter.

The dinner was gay. The saturnine doctor told some good medical stories. And after dinner, when a whisper from me to my friend expressed my delight, and the hope that he might succeed in obtaining the great favour for me, he immediately went to the doctor and broached the subject. I watched the grave face anxiously enough, but could make no guess as to the success or failure of my friend, who presently returned to me and informed me that Dr. Rose would "think about it." This did not look quite hopeful. The evening ended by the doctor asking me for my address; he then promised that he would call and talk my request over.

In a few days the promised visit was paid. At

his request, I showed him two or three of the pictures just completed, and explained to him my straits in the matter of "Holy Eyes."

"Yes," said he, "I can see that my wife would do; and if you can persuade her to sit—I have as yet said nothing to her on the subject—I can have no objection. Will you dine with us on any disengaged day? You have my card. You will find my address No. —, Harley Street."

A day was fixed, and the first sitting followed speedily. I found Mrs. Rose in every respect delightful. She drew fairly well, and had much love and taste for art. The sittings were too agreeable to allow of their being hurried over. I introduced Dr. and Mrs. Rose to my mother, who lived in Osnaburgh Street with my brother, sister, and myself — my painting-room being in Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square. An unusually rapid intimacy sprang up between us all. We were constantly at each other's houses; and the more I saw of the Roses, the better I liked them. It seems an odd remark to make at this point of my true story; but the disclosure is necessary to account in some degree for subsequent events. Rose never had the sense of smell.

One night, when I was reading in the dining-room, and meditating an immediate retirement to bed, I heard a loud ringing of the front-door bell, repeated still louder almost immediately. The servants and the rest of the family had gone to bed, and the house was closed for the night. I hurried

to the front-door, and before I could open it, the bell rang again. To my amazement I found Rose, seemingly wet through—for the night was very stormy—his face marked with lines of passion and despair to such an extent as actually to change the man's appearance almost beyond recognition.

"Why, Rose, what's the matter?"

"Let me—let me in," he answered in a hoarse whisper.

Great heaven, thought I, is the man ill, or drunk, or what? I supported him into the dining-room.

"Now, dear fellow, tell me what has induced you to knock me up at this time of night."

"Is that soda-water?"

"Yes; have some?"

"And brandy, if you've got it."

"Now then, what is it that distresses you so?"

By this time the doctor's face was buried in his hands, and his tears and sobs were awful to witness. After a seemingly desperate struggle with himself, he looked into my face with an expression in his own never to be forgotten, and then said calmly:

"I'm going to tell you something that you won't believe."

"Very likely," said I, with a forced smile. "What is it?"

"What is it—my God, what is it? Why, it's just this—my wife is a drunkard."

"You must be mad to say such a thing."

"Am I? Well, you go and see for yourself, my dear fellow. She is lying maudlin drunk on the

sofa at this moment, and I see now she has been drunk night after night. I go out a good deal, you know, night and day. Several times lately, when I have returned, I have found her sitting up for me in a kind of semi-unconscious condition—stupefied with sleep and fatigue I thought, perhaps. Well, to-night I found her in the same kind of almost epileptic state, and by her side a tumbler with some white liquid. I tasted it, and, by God, it was gin! I could not smell it. I can't smell anything, or I might have found her out weeks ago, for I now hear from that d——d old nurse of hers—what a fool I was to let that woman into the house!—that she has been at it for months—for months, I tell you, beginning with brandy which that infernal woman gave her for some trifling ailment. Now look here, Frith: I haven't come here only to tell you all this. I want you and another friend of mine, a lawyer, to take the business into your hands, and arrange for a separation, for I will never live with that woman another day." This he emphasized with an oath too fearful to repeat.

I spent hours that night in reasoning with the poor fellow; and I succeeded at last in talking him into a calmer condition of mind.

"Go home now. I will go to Darrell, the lawyer, in the morning, and we will see what can be done."

He left me a shattered and most unhappy man. Darrell and I agreed that an attempt should be made to reform this young creature. We saw her, and after the first horror of having to acknowledge

her dreadful habits to us, she declared solemnly and eagerly that if her husband would forgive her, she would consent to be placed in any institution he might appoint, and go through the severest discipline for any length of time. She felt confident, she said, that if the temptation were placed beyond her reach for a short time even, she would lose the taste for it, and a cure would be easy. She was very young, not much past nineteen, and it was impossible to see this fair young thing and listen to her pleading without being very much touched by it. Our difficulty was with the husband. For a long time he would not listen to us.

"She might go, and she should go; she can drink herself to death, and then she will trouble nobody any more. And who, pray, ever heard of a woman, who had once acquired the habit, being reformed?"

"I have," said Darrell, "four in my experience, and they were all older than your wife."

"Are you telling me the truth now, or is that what you lawyers call a legal fiction?"

"It is the solemn truth," said Darrell.

We at last wrung from him a consent that the trial should be made, and it was made on the morning following. The Dipsomaniacal Institute was given up, and the young lady was consigned to the care of two elderly French ladies, who kept a school at Bridgewater—what is called, I believe, a finishing school, where only girls of a mature age are admitted. These ladies were, of course, made

acquainted with every particular, and they cheerfully undertook the attempt at a cure.

Eighteen months passed away, bringing us (Rose would not hear of direct communication with himself) at intervals most cheering accounts. Mrs. Rose was the delight of all with whom she came in contact. At first everything in the shape of wine and beer was kept out of her sight; but soon she could be trusted to see them, though never to taste them, and she never showed the least desire to touch wine, beer, or spirits; in fact, she assured the elder of the French ladies that it was a mystery which perplexed her much, how she could ever have drank what was offensive to her now—even to smell. All this was communicated to Dr. Rose; and at last, to our great happiness, he consented to receive her home again. But first she must sign a paper in the presence of myself and Darrell, in which she undertook, in many solemn words, never to touch alcohol in any form—wine or beer—except by the permission of her husband. The day of her arrival from Bridgewater we all dined together; the girl's beauty seemed to have increased, if possible, and it was an inexpressible satisfaction to Darrell and me to see our efforts crowned with success. Six weeks, or at most two months, had only passed, when Rose, returning home, found his wife in such a condition of drunkenness as only to leave her power to stagger across the room, fall at her husband's feet, cling about his knees, and implore him not to go and fetch me and Darrell, so that we might see what a

"depraved wretch" she was. He rushed from the house to fetch us. There was an unnatural calm in Rose's manner when he announced the failure of our "well-meant efforts," as he called them.

"I am sorry," he said to Darrell, in bantering tones, "that you have not been able to add to your list of redeemed ones. As you were both witnesses to the woman's solemn pledge, you must come with me and see how well she has kept it."

Not another word was spoken till we arrived in Harley Street. Rose let us in by means of his latch-key, and led the way to the drawing-room. No one was there. He rang the bell.

"Where is your mistress?"

"Don't know, sir."

"Wait here, Darrell. I will go and look for her; she couldn't go out."

He left the room. Too distressed to talk to one another, we sat awestruck. In a few moments we heard a cry that literally froze my blood. We rushed from the room. The cry was repeated, and a voice added, "Come here—come here!"

We descended the stairs, and met a frightened footman, who pointed to the surgery. We entered, and found Rose on his knees by the dead body of his wife. The smell of prussic acid that seemed to fill the surgery told the fate of the miserable girl.

CHAPTER XIII.

"FOR BETTER, FOR WORSE."

THE end of May found me at home and at work once more. My diary under May 28th says:

"Sketched out composition of a wedding-party, which might do, but fear it is not very interesting. In great despair about subjects."

This picture represents a bride and bridegroom on the point of leaving for the honeymoon. Their brougham waits; and a crowd of passers-by watch the departure, while from the doorsteps—on which the bride's family and friends are collected—come the usual showers of rice and slippers, and from a balcony above the portico guests take a last look at the newly-married. I was prompted to this subject by seeing an almost identical realization of it in Cleveland Square. The street crowd, through an avenue of which the lady and gentleman go to their carriage, is composed of street boys, the more inquisitive being kept back by a policeman with an unnecessary display of force; a Jew clothesman; a servant whose curiosity has stopped her on her way to post a letter; and, last and best part of the picture, a group of

beggars who approach from the street, the man, his wife and children illustrating the latter part of the title of the picture, "For Better, for Worse."

After much search I discovered a Jew of a very marked type, who consented to sit if I would make it "worth his while." He was a person in very humble circumstances, but his time was of enormous value. He declined to divulge the secret of its value, but he made such a demand as to place his services out of the question, unless it could be much modified.

"How many hours will you want me?"

"I can't tell; that will depend upon your sitting partly, and more on the way I can take advantage of it."

"Well, suppose we say ten shillings an hour; that's reasonable, ain't it?" said the Israelite.

"No, I think it is unreasonable, and quite out of the question," said I.

"Got any old clothes?"

"No."

"No! Vot do you do with 'em, then?"

"Wear them," I replied.

"Come, now, that von't do. Those you've got on ain't old ones!"

"No; these are my Sunday ones; and I don't want to waste any more of your valuable time, so unless you will agree to sit to me for three hours for the ten shillings, I will wish you good-morning."

"Make it twelve and six."

"No."

"Vell, then, say eleven, and it's a bargain."

"No, it isn't; ten is the outside."

"And some old clothes," said the man, with a frightful smile. "I can't say no fairer than that."

We struck the bargain, including the clothes; the old man declaring, when the sittings were over, that I was a very nice gentleman, and it had been a pleasure to him to oblige me, but he had been such a loser by the transaction that he hoped I would think of him when I had worn my Sunday suit a little longer, for it was "already too shabby for any gentleman to wear, let alone," etc. He called many times; but as I had paid him very well for his sitting, I desired my servant to say, in reply to his affectionate inquiry after my "Sunday suit," that, like the eagles, it "had renewed its youth," and had become so interesting to me, from my having worn it when painting from him, that I felt I could never part from it. Many years have passed, and I am at last free from the visits of my Jewish model.

Among the lookers-on at my wedding-party were an Italian boy and monkey. After acquiring a certain power of painting the human being, animals ought not to be very difficult; but then the animal must not be a monkey. Little children are maddening; but commend me to the most terrible of those in preference to a monkey. I suppose it is not possible that the monkey knew what I wanted, and was determined I should not get it; but his conduct could only be accounted for on that hypothesis. I desired his young master to hold the creature's head in the proper direction. For an instant he succeeded;

then, with a wriggle and a squeak, the animal freed itself, slipped from his fingers, sprang on to my easel, and grinned at me from the top of it. This performance was constantly repeated, varied by attacks on the picture itself. I was thankful when at last "an exposition of sleep" came over the animal, and I managed to complete my work.

In a picture by Wilkie, in the National Gallery, called "The Parish Beadle," there is an admirable portrait of one of these disagreeable little brutes. In his diary, Wilkie says he was obliged to go to Exeter Change (then a large menagerie, on the site of the present Exeter Hall) on a Sunday, that being the only day on which he could do his work free from interruption. The artist was pursuing his task, when a much smaller monkey than his sitter worked his way through the bars of its cage and perambulated the room. The menagerie consisted of a set of large rooms, in which many animals were confined in separate cages. In the room in which the painter was working, a tiger was fast asleep. The monkey, with the curiosity peculiar to his species, made his way to the tiger through the bars into the den, which he investigated to his satisfaction; but, unfortunately, in retreating he tried to make a short cut to the bars over the body of the tiger. The tiger awoke—a scream! a blow from a paw!—and in a few moments nothing of the monkey remained to point the moral attending the fatal effects of curiosity.

It was while painting the picture "For Better, for

Worse," that an incident occurred which proved, in a remarkable manner, the difficulty with which the amateur model has to contend. Artists know how constantly persons unaccustomed to sitting, or rather standing—in the fatiguing attitudes required—are attacked by fainting fits so suddenly as to require a constant look-out on the part of the painter for the premonitory symptoms that he knows so well—a deadly pallor overspreads the face, the lips become colourless, and, unless a change of attitude is afforded at once, the model falls to the floor, and work is over for the day. On the occasion I speak of a boy was standing for me in an easy position, with his hands in his pockets. I was at work on his face, and saw no sign of a change in his complexion; when, without moving his hands from his trousers, he fell like one shot. I have known soldiers, boxers, and the like; powerful-looking men, unable to endure the strain of standing still in one position, though the action may be simple and easy enough, for a quarter of an hour without sensations—which they declare they have never felt before—incapacitating them for a time. In one of my friend's studios a girl fell into a stove and disfigured herself for life.

The picture "For Better, for Worse," together with an episode in the life of Swift, formed my contributions to the Exhibition of 1881.

The mystery attending the relations existing between Swift, Stella, and Vanessa will probably never be solved. That he really married the former

has been doubted; but it is sure that his heartless treatment of Vanessa shortened her life.

That Hester Vanhomrigh — otherwise Vanessa — was deeply in love with Swift, and that she expected and hoped to be his wife, there can be no doubt. That she had warrant for her belief Swift's own words prove; and when the rumours of the marriage of her lover with her rival reached Vanessa, what so natural, what so straightforward, as her appeal to Stella for the truth or falsehood of the report? The appeal took the form of a letter of inquiry, and the letter fell into the hands of Swift. Readers of that great genius's works, and students of his life, need not be told of the effects of such a letter upon a man who was the victim of passion so uncontrollable as to affright beholders of its results.

With the letter in his hand, Swift galloped from Dublin to Miss Vanhomrigh's house, some miles away, leapt from his horse, and rushed unannounced into her presence; then, without speaking a word, but with a look that froze her blood, he threw the letter on to the table and left her for ever.

The unhappy woman, heart-stricken, faded from that day, and died soon after.

I could find no authority for the likeness of Vanessa, but for Swift the portrait by Jervas proved all that I could desire. It is an excellent picture, and from its strong character must be a good likeness. The man was very handsome, and as he sits smiling on Jervas's canvas, one finds it as difficult to imagine those features twisted out of shape, and

distorted by passion, as it is to conceive a tranquil summer sea with its tiny waves breaking silently on the shore, transformed into a storm-driven ocean.

I found the subject I had chosen a very difficult one. I fear it required a more powerful pencil than mine to portray the crushed heart and mind of Vanessa, or the lightning fury of Swift.

CHAPTER XIV.

MODELS—THIEVISH.

THERE is no doubt that one of the great difficulties besetting a painter's life is the procuring of models suitable to so much variety of character as certain subjects require for their realization. Scarcely a day —certainly never a week—passes without applicants for sittings making their appearance in artists' studios, of all ages, from the baby in arms to the man of eighty. Still, the exact type wanted may fail to present itself; in that case the streets or friends' houses must be searched, and often in vain. Considering that all who apply to us are perfect strangers, and that we are often obliged to leave them alone in our rooms, it is surprising and creditable to the model profession generally, that so few instances of theft ever occur.

I was once very nearly being a victim at the hands of a small boy, whom I had picked up in the street to serve as model for a crossing-sweeper. The young gentleman was, in fact, in the practice of that profession when I addressed him, and easily persuaded

him to come in his rags and with his broom to my rooms. I had taken a foolish fancy to paint a small picture of a lady at a crossing, waiting till her passage might be made safely, and paying no attention to a crossing-sweeper, who was to be represented in the usual begging attitude. The figure of the lady in the picture was in a fair way towards finish before I succeeded in finding the boy I wanted. He sat two or three times fairly well, and I appointed him to come for a final sitting. His hair was cut very short; his face, though not good-looking, was full of character, and I succeeded pretty well in getting a good likeness of him. In those days it was my custom (long discontinued) to dine in the middle of the day, and at the same time to send the models their luncheon. Before I left the studio for my dinner I had occasion to wind up my watch; I performed the operation, and placed a short gold chain and key used for the purpose upon the chimney-piece. On my return from dinner I found my young model fast asleep. The day was warm, the luncheon was plentiful, the boy was tired, and I let him sleep on. After a while we went on with our work, finished it successfully, and the time had arrived to pay the model and despatch him. I had forgotten the chain and key till that moment. I looked for it in the place on the chimney-piece—it was gone! I knew no one had been into the room but the servant, for whom I rang; and to my inquiry after my property, I received the reply I expected—she had seen nothing of it.

"Did you see anything of my chain and key?" said I to the boy.

"No, sir."

"Yes you did, for I saw you looking at me when I was winding up my watch."

"I never see no chain."

"Now, look here, my boy: no one has been into the room; the chain couldn't walk away, and you must have it."

"Me, sir! S'help me, if it was the last word——"

"Hold your tongue, and produce the chain, or I will send for a policeman and give you in charge."

"I don't care for no policeman, and I don't know nothing about no chain."

"We shall soon see about that," said I, as I directed my servant to fetch a policeman, at the same time giving the girl a sign that told her not to take my order literally.

I looked at the boy as he sat on a high chair, his broom between his legs, which he dangled about in a careless, independent manner. Presently he began to cry.

"Come here, sir!" said I, and he shuffled towards me. "Now, where are your pockets?"

"Ain't got no pockets."

I felt about his jacket, and certainly there was no pocket, nor any other receptacle for stolen property; but in submitting the ragged trousers to a closer scrutiny I came upon something harder than rag, and after a little perseverance I extracted one of my

cigars from the lining of the young gentleman's inexpressibles. Tears and sobs increased very much.

"Now," said I, "produce the chain, or as sure as you are born I will lock you up."

The weeping ceased as suddenly as it had begun; the boy wiped his eyes with the back of his hand, and then applying his fingers with a dexterous twist to the back of his neck, he drew out my chain and key from the region of the spinal column—rather low down, apparently, for he was obliged to throw out his elbow to a height that nothing but long practice could have enabled him to accomplish—and my property was restored to me.

"I know where you live," said I, "and I shall make a point of telling your father of this; and what do you think he will say to you?"

"He'll whack me."

From information afterwards received, I believe a "whacking" would certainly have been bestowed, but it would have been administered in consequence of the young gentleman's failure in his attempt to rob me. After a severe lecture I dismissed my thievish model. On leaving home for my afternoon's walk, within a few paces of my front-door I met a policeman.

"Beg your pardon, sir," said the man; "might you be the landlord of this house?"

"Yes," I replied.

"Well, sir, I see a boy come out of your back-gate, which I know something about. What might he been doing of on your premises?"

I explained the reason of the boy's appearance.

"Ah," said the policeman, "perhaps you don't know as that boy is one of the worst thieves in London; he's only just out of prison. Didn't you notice his 'air, with the prison-cut quite fresh? You'll be having your house robbed, sir. That boy's father is a thief, so's his mother, and his sister. There is always one or other of 'em in prison."

After this warning I need scarcely add that I saw no more of my thievish model.

CHAPTER XV.

"OLD MASTERS."

A PORTION of the year in which the pictures of "Swift, etc.," were produced was spent in the service of the Winter Exhibition of Old Masters. My duties took me into strange places, and amongst strange, though often agreeable, people, all more or less curiously ignorant of the value of the treasures in their keeping, and sometimes fancying whole housefuls of rubbish, gems of art. One of my first visits was paid to a huge mansion in the north. The rooms were crowded with pictures of all shapes and sizes, heirlooms, etc. A single glance was sufficient; daub after daub filled my afflicted vision, whilst I waited for my cicerone, who presently appeared, catalogue in hand, in the shape of one of the young ladies of the family.

"May I ask who that picture is painted by?" said I, pointing to a Wardour Street example.

"That is by Titian—'A Holy Family.'"

"Ah! and this one?"

"That" (referring to catalogue) "is by—by—Domy— Dom—, my sister writes so badly I can't quite make out."

"Oh, Domenichino," said I. "Is it?—very interesting—I never saw a picture of foxhounds by that painter before."

"Yes," said my cicerone; "'Pack of hounds, fox breaking cover.'"

"Dear me," I said, "the people in those days dressed pretty much as they do now—red coats, top-boots, and everything."

"So they did," rejoined the young lady; "and Domy—, what do you call him, lived many years ago, didn't he?"

"Yes, about three hundred or thereabouts; but perhaps he was a prophet as well as a painter, and could foresee the kind of dress that would be worn in England a few centuries after his death."

I went steadily through this remarkable gathering without finding a single picture above contempt.

"Now," said my young friend, "you must come into the billiard-room; it is quite full of portraits of our ancestors, by Vandyke, but, before you see them, I am to tell you that we cannot let them go to London—any other picture you can have."

To my surprise I found the Vandykes were very fair specimens of Lely—one or two excellent.

"These are by Vandyke, are they?" said I.

"Yes. They have been here ever since they were painted. Mamma has all the receipts from Vandyke for the different sums paid for the pictures."

"My duty," said I, "is simply to report upon the works I see, to the Council of the Royal Academy; you will no doubt hear from them on the subject."

"Oh, I had nearly forgotten one of our greatest pictures, always *so* much admired; it is by Gainsborough, on the staircase. You won't mind taking the trouble to mount the stairs?"

I followed my guide up several flights of stairs, and at length found myself opposite a whole-length life-sized portrait of a man in armour, as worn during reign of Elizabeth—a vile picture.

"Are you sure this is by Gainsborough?" I inquired.

"Perfectly, and it is thought by good judges" (emphasis on *good judges*) "to be a very *fine* Gainsborough."

"Then that great artist," said I, "has adopted a method curiously in opposition to Domenichino, for he has gone back a couple of centuries to paint some one he couldn't possibly have seen."

My cicerone seemed bewildered. I thanked her for her attention, and wished her good-day. My reader may doubt the truth of the above, but the facts occurred just as I have told them.

The pictures of Reynolds are so much desired for the Winter Exhibition, that neither trouble nor expense are spared in searching for them; so hearing of one, described to me as of unusual splendour, I made a journey into Wales with the solitary Reynolds for its object. The owner was from home, but the lady of the house received me very courteously, and, though unable to promise to lend the picture to the Academy, she allowed me to see it.

"My husband's great-grandmother, by Sir J.

Reynolds, considered by connoisseurs as his finest work."

"It is a very fine picture indeed," said I; "but it was not painted by Reynolds."

"Not painted by—why, I can show you Sir Joshua's receipt for his fee!"

I had a difficult game to play. I wanted the picture very much, for it was a very beautiful Romney, so I fear I rather played the hypocrite, and pretended to doubt my own judgment; finally the picture was sent to Burlington House, accompanied by a letter from the owner, which informed the Council that, though doubt had been thrown upon the picture by Mr. Frith, who had told Lady Blank that the painter of the work was not Sir Joshua Reynolds, he, the proprietor, possessed such convincing evidence to the contrary, that unless the picture could be described in the catalogue as by Reynolds, he would be obliged to the Council if they would send it back immediately. We were greatly troubled; it was impossible to stultify ourselves by putting the name of Reynolds to a palpable Romney, and we were very anxious to exhibit the picture. A letter was therefore written by the secretary informing the owner of the Sir Joshua (by order of Council), that his Reynolds was a Romney, and must be exhibited as such, or not at all. Like a sensible man Lord Blank gave way, and his great-grandmother, a very lovely young creature, proved one of the most attractive pictures in the Winter Exhibition of 1881.

As I find I visited thirty-eight different collections of old masters, and named for selection over three hundred pictures, an idea may be formed of the almost inexhaustible wealth of ancient art in this country. I forget the name of the owner of the house in which I found two very fine half-length portraits by Romney, representing a lady and gentleman—husband and wife, I think—the lady very charming, the gentleman of a strongly marked individuality, his expression conveying the idea of a somewhat irascible temper. On inquiry, I was told that the face was the "index of the mind," the owner of it being in the habit of giving way to paroxysms of fury that made him a terror to all offenders, his servants especially. After the death of his wife, the fits of passion became more frequent. This gentleman had a large acquaintance, and was a constant diner-out. Living in the country, and his friends' houses lying at varying distances from his own, his carriage was in frequent requisition, the rule being for the coachman to drive his master home, when that gentleman, opening the carriage door, would let himself into his house. On one boisterous night the customary programme was enacted; and the coachman, after pausing at the door as usual, drove to the stables, housed the carriage, and afterwards stabled the horses. He then went to his supper, and was surprised by an inquiry by a footman after his master.

"Master!" said the coachman; "why, he let himself in as usual half an hour ago, and he is in bed and asleep by this time."

"No, that he can't be," said the footman. "He always rings for me, and I've heard nothing of him. Anyway, I'll go and see."

The man returned presently.

His master couldn't be in the house. He was not to be found anywhere.

The coachman stared at his fellow-servant for a moment, then hastily rose from the supper-table, beckoning the footman to follow—warning him to make no noise. The two went stealthily together to the coach-house, where they found their master sound asleep in his carriage.

"Lend a hand with the harness," said the coachman.

In a few minutes the horses were harnessed, and attached to the carriage, and the irritable passenger, still asleep, was driven to his house-door. Here it was found necessary to wake him, and with an exclamation, "Why, bless my soul, I must have been asleep!" he entered his house, never suspecting, or to the end of his life ever knowing, that he had spent part of the night in his own coach-house.

Numberless examples of the ignorance of collectors or inheritors of pictures might be given, but I will add only one more instance of strange credulity, for the truth of which my colleague in the search for old pictures, Mr. Horsley, R.A., is responsible. In one of his wanderings in the north of England, my friend was told that he must not leave that part of the country without seeing a picture which had just arrived from abroad—no less than a Leonardo da

Vinci, valued at three thousand guineas. The picture had been consigned to a distant relative of the owner, with a view to its sale at Christie and Manson's in the spring. Though Mr. Horsley had long journeys and hard work on his hands, the temptation to secure, if possible, so rare a treasure as a fine work by one of the greatest ornaments of the Italian school, was too great to be resisted. The picture also appeared with such strong evidences of authenticity, as to make its genuineness almost unquestionable. The family for which the great artist painted the picture had transmitted it from father to son down to the representative now living, etc.

It is the rule with those who have the selection of the Winter Exhibition pictures, to refrain from giving their personal opinion of works offered. The owners are always told that the decision rests with a committee formed expressly to decide—after reports from the selectors—as to what shall or shall not be exhibited. But when candid opinion is asked, it is often as candidly given. In the case of the Leonardo, the artist was so pressed by the consignee (who had no interest in the picture, and considerable doubt of its authenticity) to give his real opinion of its commercial value, that he did not hesitate to appraise it at five pounds, provided always the picture were sold in its frame; the latter a good old carved one, being worth about that sum.

"In that case," said the temporary custodian, "it will be of no use sending the picture to London for sale."

"Not unless you will take five pounds for it," said Horsley.

"But how can this be ascertained so as to convince the owner?"

"Well," replied the artist, "I will give you a letter of introduction to Messrs. Christie. I will write it now, here if you like. You shall see it, and I will give those gentlemen no clue to my own opinion. Send the picture to King Street. Ask what it will be likely to fetch under the hammer there, and you will most likely find that my estimate of the value is pretty nearly correct."

The advice was taken. The Leonardo da Vinci was sent to Christie and Manson, with the inquiry proposed by Mr. Horsley. The eminent firm regretted to say that there would be no chance of the picture selling for more than the value of the frame, which might reach five pounds. It is curious that without any communication with the artist, the auctioneers should have named the precise sum fixed by him.

CHAPTER XVI.

A SUCCESSFUL DEALER.

LOUIS VICTOR FLATOW, picture-dealer, was the son of a poor Austrian Jew, so poor as to be unable to give his son education enough to enable him to read or write. In lieu of teaching, when the son had arrived at the age of eleven, the father placed in his hands some sheaves of lead pencils, and told him to be off and get his own living; "and from that time till now," said Mr. Flatow, "and I'm between forty and fifty—though I don't look it—I have got my own living." How that was managed for some years, Louis Victor declined to say, beyond acknowledging that the lead-pencil scheme was very soon exchanged for some other, by which he managed to exist, till fate or chance threw in his way a Belgian who dealt in "old masters." The "old-master pattern," as Flatow called it, succeeded in filling the pockets of his employer without having much effect upon his own; and whether because he was shocked by the tricks of that trade, or disappointed with their results as regarded his own future, is not known, but

after some experience of the business, he left his employer and started on his own account.

I forget the name of the dealer in "old masters," but his pupil said he was one of those who acknowledged that honesty is the best policy, but "thanked God they could do without it." And if the account of the production of these ancient pictures, as practised by the Belgian, were true, honesty was certainly put on one side.

"There was a lot of young artists — clever chaps, some of 'em—copying away like fury in the public galleries; and when the copies were done, he smoked and cracked 'em till you would never believe they were less than two hundred years old."

"And what is the next step?" said I.

"Why, they were sold as originals, of course, and those who bought them believed that they possessed the originals, and the Louvre or the Dresden Gallery the copies."

"That was very abominable," said I.

"Of course it was, and I got out of it as soon as I could," was the reply.

According to Mr. Flatow, though the roguish part of the "old-master" business was abandoned by him, he continued to deal in the "real thing," till he had formed a tolerably large collection of Titians and Raphaels; and not being successful abroad, he went to Edinburgh, and introduced his exhibition with a flourish of trumpets to the Scottish public. Whether the taste of the canny Scots was not sufficiently advanced for the appreciation of the merits

of Raphael, or so much cultivated as to cause doubt of the originality of the Flatow collection, is not known; but it is quite certain that the show failed to attract. And as the expenses were great, great was the failure; and the spirited collector left Edinburgh and the "old masters" behind him. "Never, sir, to go among such a scrubby lot as the Scotch again; with a final adoo to the old-master pattern."

The next step in the career of my illustrious friend has only to be accounted for on the hypothesis of some portion of his life, between the lead-pencil and the "old-master" period, being devoted to the study and practice of chiropodism; for his next appearance is in Spring Street, London, where the passer-by might have seen a golden foot disfigured by gigantic corns, and beneath it, on a brass plate, the words, "L. V. Flatow, Chiropodist."

Mr. Flatow was a very remarkable man, and whatever he undertook to do was done with an energy and devotedness common to great characters; but greatness cannot always make the opportunity necessary for its display, and the comparative failure of the corn-cutting proved that the hour for the glory of my friend had not yet struck. To beguile the weary time that was so ready to be devoted to the relief of his fellow-creatures, Mr. Flatow indulged himself with a game of billiards. It goes without saying that the game as played by the corn-cutter was splendid, so perfect, indeed, that no frequenter of the rooms of my friend Mr. Beckingham could be induced, even

for the smallest stake, to enter the lists against him.

Mr. Beckingham is, or was, the proprietor of the Adelphi Cigar Stores in the Strand; the billiard-rooms are above the shop, and after descending from the rooms one day, Mr. Flatow produced some cards, and thus addressed the amiable tobacconist:

"I see, sir, that you have a great many visitors to your establishment; sure, some of 'em—many of 'em, I hope—must be troubled with corns. Now you would oblige me very much—you would, in fact, be of great service to me—if you would distribute some of my cards; and if you happen to have a corn about you, I shall be happy to prove to you, free gratis for nothing, that I am well up in the business."

"I will try to serve you with much pleasure," said Mr. Beckingham; "and you can serve me, I assure you, for I am at this moment dreadfully troubled with a most persistent corn."

Patient and operator retired into a little room at the back of the shop; and in a few minutes, and with admirable skill, a painless operation was performed. I am sure, from what I know of Mr. Beckingham's amiable character, that he distributed many cards, adding strong commendation of Mr. Flatow's ability; but when destiny has prescribed a fate, corn-cutting cannot break the web, and the moment was near that was to signalize the commencement of the career of one of the most successful dealers in modern art that this country has seen.

Mr. Beckingham was well acquainted with an

artist who, in his youth, had painted many pictures of great merit; but on arriving at mature age the public deserted him, and the difficulty of finding purchasers for his works became very great. Beckingham had bought some of his pictures, and had been the means of selling others; and on one occasion when Flatow happened to be by, the artist produced two small pictures, for which he wanted ten pounds apiece. Flatow examined them, and said he flattered himself he knew something of the picture business; and if he might be trusted with the pictures he would either bring them, or the money for them, to Beckingham the next night. He was trusted, and he sold the pictures and received his commission in the ordinary way. Introductions to certain artists followed, and by some means or other Mr. Flatow obtained the command of a sufficient sum of money to enable him to "deal," though not at first very extensively.

I think it was when I was putting the last touches to the "Derby Day" that I first heard the name of Flatow from a friend of mine, who described him as a knowing Jewish picture-dealer, not beautiful to look at, but liberal and straightforward in all his engagements, and very anxious for an introduction to me. I was curious to see the man, and a day was named for his visit. I did not quite like his manner of approaching me; it was too deferential, too much as if I should be conferring an honour, of which no human being could be worthy, if I would only paint a large picture for him, for which he was prepared

to pay my price; and prepared also to devote superhuman energy to make an engraving from it successful. And as to the exhibition of it throughout the country, he would "perform with it himself."

A single glance at Mr. Flatow was enough to prove that a very energetic and astute individual stood before you—the Israelite strongly in evidence, and by no means a favourable type of that great race. That undisguisable feature, the mouth, was mercifully covered by a beard, and if it were at all in accord with the upper part of the face, the beard became a valuable cloak. I am always of opinion that the face is a sure index of character, but there are exceptions to every rule; and so far as my own dealings with Mr. Flatow were concerned, I had every reason to be satisfied with his conduct. My first transaction with him was for my picture of "Claude Duval," followed by the "Railway Station," a work on the lines of the "Derby Day," and other modern-life subjects; and with the "Railway Station" came a signal success, greatly owing, I am sure, to the way in which Flatow "performed with it himself."

Five-and-twenty years ago, there were no exhibitions of pictures in London except at the galleries of the Royal Academy, British Artists (Suffolk Street), and at the rooms of the Society of Painters in Water Colours. The separate exhibition of a picture was quite a novelty, and the "Railway Station," deservedly or not, attracted large crowds. It was then quite "alone in its glory," in a kind of dark gallery, near the Haymarket Theatre, the picture

being placed in the inner gallery; and from the outer room Mr. Flatow scanned his visitors, fixing with great acuteness on those whose appearance indicated the weakness of the victim, and proceeding at once to spread a snare, which usually caught a subscriber to the engraving. Everyone knows the nuisance of the picture tout, whose persevering appeals for your name to be added to the already "long list of distinguished personages" who have subscribed, embitters your probably short time for examining a picture; and though I was often amused by the indomitable perseverance of my *entrepreneur*, it was my fate sometimes to hear uncomplimentary remarks on my picture and myself. On one occasion I remember hearing Mr. Flatow make a last appeal to a gentleman, whom he had been pestering for five minutes, in the following words:

"I feel sure that Mr. Frith would feel particularly proud to see your name, sir, in the list of subscribers to the fine engraving we are about to publish of this great work."

"From what I hear of Mr. Frith," said the gentleman, "he is conceited enough without any help from my name to make him more conceited than he is."

On another occasion a very old man tried to escape by saying, in reply to Flatow's assurance that the engraver would work with such extreme care that at least three years would be spent on the print:

"Why, sir," said the old gentleman, "I shall be dead before the engraving is done."

"Well, sir, then think what a blessing such a work would be to your children!"

"But I haven't got any," replied the old man, and once more Mr. Flatow was defeated.

Another time, after he had expatiated in glowing terms on the varied beauties of the picture, the intended victim replied:

"Indeed, ah! I can't agree with what you say. You don't know me, do you? I thought not. Well, I am an artist myself, and if I couldn't paint a better picture than that, I would go home and hang myself."

One of Mr. Flatow's favourite figures of speech was, "Lord bless you! there ain't a dealer in London that knows how to manipulate a customer; you must walk round 'em as a cooper walks round a tub."

I suppose no picture exists that has escaped hostile criticism. Certainly the "Railway Station" received an abundant share; and I remember showing my employer rather a severe dose of it in a weekly paper. Then, for the first time, I became certain that my friend could not read. I gave him the periodical, and pointed out the column of abuse, and by his expression I saw the page was sealed to him. He gave the paper back to me and said, "Who cares what such a d——d fool as that says!" He could write his name in curious hieroglyphics, and he could read simple words in large capitals; and I have often been amused by the way he paraded his learning as he walked along the streets.

"Ah, large place that Infirmary, I see!"

"What's that? Oh, Hospital for Incurables!" I added.

"They haven't let that house yet, I see. Suppose the neighbourhood's going down."

I never had a doubt that Flatow—proving, as he did, a very remarkable person without having had the advantage of education—would have provided for himself some conspicuous position in the world, and have filled it well, under happier circumstances. He could not read, but many books had been read to him by a devoted wife; and with the whole of Dickens's works he was familiar, their perusal producing profound admiration of the author, and a burning desire for his acquaintance. He was very intimate with a young artist, then and now eminent, who at that time was illustrating one of Dickens's books, and was a near friend of the great author. Dickens and the young painter were on the eve of a trip to Paris, and the artist took advantage of this arrangement to endeavour to carry out Flatow's cherished desire. Said he, "Dickens and I will be at Meurice's Hotel at a certain time. Go over to Paris, put up at Meurice's, and I will introduce you."

No sooner said than done. Flatow returned, and called on me.

"Well," said I, "how do you like Dickens?"

"Like Dickens!" said Flatow, with affected surprise. "What is there to like about him? I ain't going to bow down to him—a stuck-up humbug! He thinks a lot of himself and his cleverness because

he wrote 'Pickwick,' and such like. Why, he couldn't help writing 'em. He deserves no credit for that. He a clever man! Let him just go and sell a lot of pictures to a man that don't want 'em, as I have done lots of times; that's what I call being a clever man."

This was strange, but the interpretation thereof simple, when it was discovered that the good-natured young painter failed in persuading Dickens to be introduced to a gentleman whose appearance and *table-d hôte* manners were far from conciliatory. To those who could endure a certain amount of rough vulgarity, Flatow was a very amusing person. He was a good mimic, and he managed to ingratiate himself with people greatly his superiors. Fechter was a great friend of his, and when some one applied to that actor's representation of Hamlet—which varied altogether from the recognised reading of the character—the well-known remark of the Russian on the unfortunate Light Cavalry charge in the Crimea, "C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre;" "I believe you, sir," said Flatow, "it just is magnificent."

On shaking hands with his gloves on, he would say, "Excuse my glove, sir; it is the honester skin of the two." And he has told me more than once that on parting with a client after a heavy picture-transaction, and dismissing him, still gloved, with his favourite remark, he fancied the gentleman believed him. "But he was wrong, sir. I lost by nearly every one of 'em." So long as an artist worked conscientiously and successfully for him, he was full of

praise; and what was better, carried out his engagements to the letter, and sometimes beyond it; but if he found he had made a mistake, and the painter had what he called "gone to weeds," he would dispute the quality of the goods, and leave the painter to his legal remedy. "He call hisself an artist!" I heard him say of a friend of my own; "he is only fit to be a fogey-trapper." This being the Flatow vernacular for photographer.

Flatow's business became very large, and, his profits, I believe, proportionate. I had many transactions with him, though never of the importance of the "Railway Station," by which he is said to have made thirty thousand pounds. I cannot, and do not, vouch for the truth of this; but as he died worth eighty thousand pounds, he may be credited with having made a large profit out of my work. Like many of his tribe, he was fond of gems of all kinds—which he called "jools"—and fonder still of displaying them on his own person. He would sometimes offer bracelets and rings for pictures or sketches; but at values which were found to be much overrated. I was satisfied with one transaction of that nature; other artists were not so fortunate.

Flatow was scarcely middle-aged when severe illness struck him down. His sufferings were fearful. He had taken a large house in Porchester Terrace, made up his mind to take business more easily, and enjoy what he said he had "stacked away;" but he became so rapidly worse as to leave all hope behind. He had no family, his sole attendants being his wife

and one of our old models, named Wall—from whom I had intelligence of his last days. The poor fellow's temper became dreadful, and he attacked his doctors furiously. On a certain occasion one of the most eminent physicians in London had prescribed some remedy from which the patient thought he had not only derived no benefit, but had been made actually worse. In answer to Flatow's inquiry if the medicine was to be repeated, the physician said in broad Scotch, "Yes, ye'll just take the draught and the pills again to-night." Flatow's reply was: "You infernal Scotch, lanky brute! I only wish I had strength enough to reach you. I'd make you spin downstairs a precious sight quicker than you came up. If ever you show your ugly face here again, I will spoil it for you."

It is scarcely necessary to say that the face disappeared never to return.

One touch more, and I finish the portrait of Mr. Flatow. The sun was shining brightly on an early summer's morning, when Flatow said to his attendant in a voice scarcely audible, "Wall, my boy, just wheel me to the window. Put me where I can see down the Terrace. There, that will do. Don't push a fellow about as if you were dealing with a sack of coals. See that fellow there, that mechanic chap with his tools on his back going to work? I'd give all I possess, and more if I had it, to change places with him. There, move me back, and just take care how you do it, and pull down the blind."

A few days' more suffering, and the end came.

CHAPTER XVII.

A STRANGE ADVENTURE.

I MUST now return to my own doings, when a strange adventure befell me. I had just put down palette and brushes at the close of a long day's work, when a visitor was announced.

"A lady, sir; she wouldn't give her name. She has come in a beautiful carriage and pair, sir—coachman and footman. She says you will know her."

In my drawing-room I found a tall, handsome woman, approaching middle-age, dressed in black. When I entered the room she was attentively studying the engraving of my picture of "Claude Duval." She turned, and I saw a face that was entirely strange to me.

"Don't you remember me? I sat to you for that picture many years ago."

I pleaded my infirmity in remembering faces.

"Ah! I have changed no doubt, but I thought you would remember me. Can we go into your painting-room? I want to see it again, and I have also a proposal to make."

"By all means," said I, and I attempted to lead the way.

"Oh, I know my way," said my visitor, and when in the passage she turned to go to the old studio, now a billiard-room.

"No," said I, "since you were here I have built another painting-room at the top of the house.

We went upstairs, and when in the new studio the lady turned to me and said rather abruptly:

"I want you to paint my portrait. Now look well at me. Don't you remember me? I sat to you many times."

Not for the life of me—the face was perfectly strange.

"I married soon after I saw you last," said she, "and I have one daughter; she is to be married in the autumn. I want you to paint my likeness, to be presented to her as a wedding present, but"—in a low voice, and with an air more mysterious, I thought, than the occasion warranted—"it must be a dead secret; my husband must not know of it for the world, nor my daughter, of course. When can I sit?"

"I shall be very happy to do what you wish. In a fortnight's time I shall be at leisure, and you can sit when you please after then."

"In a fortnight, then, I will be here."

After my visitor left me I puzzled myself trying to remember her. Strange if I had painted the face that I could recall no trace of it. The model for the two principal figures in the "Claude Duval" I re-

membered perfectly, and she was certainly not the lady who had just left me. I referred to my diary, and I found that a Miss K—— had sat to me for some chalk-studies of the principal figure. Could she be this lady?

A fortnight passed, and punctually to the time fixed, my model came. She was very handsome, but with a face so melancholy as to defy all my attempts to give a cheerful expression to the picture.

"I am very unhappy at home," she said; "thwarted in everything I desire. I sometimes think there is a conspiracy to distress me."

To this I made some commonplace reply. I found my sitter quite impervious to all my endeavours to remove the gloom that oppressed her. The sad expression was not without its charm, and I felt I had no choice but to adopt it.

"May I ask what your name was when you sat for me?" said I.

"K——, Miss K——," was the reply.

Any doubt that was possible was dispelled; there could be no question about our having met before, but under what different circumstances! Miss K—— was certainly an ordinary artist's model, and on further inquiry I found that she acknowledged to having sat for several friends of mine, whose names she mentioned.

The sittings progressed with results more or less favourable, the gloom occasionally deepened, alternating with flashes of strange excitement when my

sitter spoke of some slight that had been passed upon her, which, when explained, never seemed to justify her agitation.

"If my husband knew of this, though it is not to please myself, he would very likely oppose it, just because I desire to please my daughter. It is my affair; he has nothing to do with it. I hope you understand it is my affair; I pay for it myself."

I confess I felt that I was scarcely justified in lending myself to a secret treaty of this kind. I ought, perhaps, to have refused to paint the portrait at all, without the knowledge of the lady's husband; but it was far advanced before the above conversation took place, and all artists know that portraits intended for presents are often produced under secret conditions.

The work progressed till two sittings were all that were required to complete it. An appointment was made, and a letter came from my sitter in reply, telling me that she had left town on a visit to a friend who had kindly offered to bring her to the next sitting. Punctually to time as ever, the lady came; as she was shown into my room my servant said:

"The gentleman will be glad to know at what time he is to call for Mrs. Y——."

I named an hour, and proceeded with my work.

"You don't seem well," I said; "I hope you are not suffering."

"Suffering! I should think I am suffering. Who would not suffer if they had to bear—— But there,

it's of no use saying any more about it. Try to get through your work a little sooner to-day, if you can."

"Of course, if you wish it," said I; "but you forget that an hour is fixed for your friend to fetch you."

"No, I don't forget; I can't forget anything. I have something to do; I must go soon. Yes, indeed; but I will be back in time enough to meet the doctor."

"Oh, your friend is a doctor! Is he your regular medical man?"

"Yes,—no. I am very well; I don't want a medical man."

"A friend only?" asked I.

Then after a pause my sitter said:

"That is all. Can I go now?"

"In a few minutes," I replied.

The lady trembled with excitement as she hastily assumed her cloak and hat. I rang the bell for the servant, who met me, and I accompanied my sitter downstairs.

"The lady is not going, is she, sir?"

"Yes, the lady is going!" said my sitter in a sharp voice, and almost before I could look round she was out of the house.

"Oh dear," said the girl, "I am so sorry! I forgot to tell you that the gentleman who came with the lady this morning, said she was on no account to be allowed to go till he came for her. I quite forgot to tell you."

"And if you had told me," said I, "I couldn't stop the lady if she desired to leave."

The front-door bell rang soon afterwards.

"I do believe that is the gentleman," said the servant.

"If so, he has come much before his time," said I, as I went back to my studio.

"It is the gentleman, sir; and he is in such a way! He wants to see you."

"Where is he?"

"He is walking backwards and forwards in the drawing-room."

To the drawing-room I went, and was met by an elderly man in such a state of excitement that, after making an ineffectual effort to speak, he threw himself into a chair, and stared at me with a look of horror.

"How could you let her go? I told your servant she was on no account to stir till I fetched her. I knew this would be a risk; I told her husband so. She ought not to have come."

"Really, sir," said I, "I don't understand you. My servant forgot to give your message to me; and if she had delivered it, I had no power to stop Mrs. Y—— when she wished to go."

"Sir, she is a lunatic, and in my charge. I am responsible for her safe custody. What is to be done now?"

"Mrs. Y—— assured me she would come back at the time fixed," said I, when I had recovered composure.

"Come back! She won't come back; I know that well enough! However, there is nothing for it

but to wait and see. Is it possible that you have seen no sign of madness?"

"None whatever," said I.

I passed a very uncomfortable quarter of an hour with the doctor, who resumed his walk up and down the drawing-room. The appointed hour passed, and no Mrs. Y——.

"I told you so," said the doctor. "She may have gone home. Would you let your servant call a cab? and will you go with me to the house? The poor husband is away. The house is not far off."

To the house we went. A footman opened the door to us.

"Mrs. Y—— here?"

"No, sir."

"Not been—eh?"

"No, sir."

"Well, Mr. Frith," said the doctor, "I needn't take up any more of your time. I can't blame you; it's very unfortunate. I shall go home after I have consulted with the most likely people to find her. God knows what I am to say to her husband! Yes, I will let you know when we hear of her."

We shook hands and parted. In a few days I heard from the doctor that the poor woman was found wandering aimlessly about the streets long after midnight, not far from her own home.

Mr. Y—— came to see the portrait; and, though he seemed to think that it should not have been undertaken without his knowledge, in which he was

possibly right, he paid for it, and behaved in all respects in a gentlemanly spirit.

I have since heard that my sitter's case is incurable. Her daughter is married, and the unfortunate husband's home is broken up. I leave experts in these dreadful cases to explain the concealment of aberration of mind, which must have existed during the many hours the poor lady sat to me. It is, of course, possible that the latent disease only showed itself in such force as to necessitate restraint at the latter part of the time required for my work; but it is strange to me that, beyond an excited manner, to be accounted for by other causes, I never discovered anything exceptional in the poor lady's conduct.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MEN-SERVANTS.

I THINK if I were ever so rich, I should as much as possible avoid men-servants; not that I have a word to say against a highly respectable portion of the community, but being, like the Vicar of Wakefield, an admirer of *happy* faces, I am also an admirer of *pretty* ones, only they must be of the female order. Those who were so fortunate as to be guests at the hospitable house of the late John Penn, of engineering fame, may remember that, however extensive might be the dinner and however large the number of diners, the whole service was conducted by women, dressed alike, and resembling each other also in another and pleasanter form, for they were good-looking without an exception. As I have elsewhere shown, I have been able to secure the services of some of my servants as models—a practice I don't recommend, because it is apt to "turn their heads" a little, and to make them careless over less agreeable duties.

In the whole course of my life I have employed only three male servants. With the first I had a very

good character, which I found on trial was well deserved. He was a good-looking, active young fellow, and would have been altogether satisfactory but for two failings—one being a determination to make as much noise as possible during every operation he was called upon to perform. He succeeded in getting the greatest amount of noise possible out of a door in opening or shutting it; he banged the plates and dishes on the table, rattled the knives and forks, and broke more crockery than the most destructive of our servants had ever done before his coming. His second failing was a total defiance of the prescribed hour for his return when he had his "Sunday out." He was informed that eleven o'clock must never be passed before his return, and he so frequently preferred twelve, and sometimes half-past twelve, that I was constrained to inform him—after about his tenth infringement of our rule—that the next time he committed himself would be the last. For a short time my warning was effectual; but the fateful Sunday night came at last. At midnight my man had not returned, and it was nearer one than twelve o'clock when he made his appearance.

"Now, West," said I, "do you know what time it is?"

"Yes; I'm afraid I am rather late, sir. The fact is, me and——"

"I don't want to hear of your doings; you know I told you that the next time you committed yourself you would be discharged, and I now give you notice that——"

"I beg your pardon, sir—you may not be aware of it, but no gentleman can give notice of a Sunday night."

"I know that," said I, "and if you had returned home on Sunday night, I might have excused you; but, you see, it is Monday morning."

So Mr. West and I parted company. West figures in the "Railway Station" picture, disguised as a porter, who is informing an old lady that she must take a dog-ticket for a pet which she is endeavouring to smuggle into the train.

West's situation was almost immediately filled by a man of very imposing presence, who had passed middle life. He came to us from a nobleman whom he had served as butler, and from whom we received a character satisfactory in all respects. He was honest, sober, attentive, and the rest of it, and his name was Johnson. If West had been noisy, Johnson was his exact opposite; indeed so silent and stealthy, so to speak, were his movements, that it was necessary to be guarded in speaking of matters not intended for kitchen discussion, for Johnson was upon us at times with a ghost-like suddenness. My friends told me, that as he stood behind my chair at dinner, the contrast between servant and master was very unfavourable to the latter. "What a refined character there is in the head of your butler! he looks like an archbishop," said an artist friend; "I wonder you don't paint him!" No one ever called West a butler; and no one called Johnson anything else.

That my new man had a taste for the fine arts might be assumed, if the fact of his long and solemn contemplation of the "Railway Station" picture was a proof; for whenever he had occasion to visit the painting-room, he would stare first at the picture and then at me, seeming by his expression to have a difficulty in determining which he admired the more.

The awe with which he inspired my children soon wore off. They were small and noisy, as is the habit of such little people; and after enduring a very demonstrative ebullition of juvenile spirits at the midday dinner on one occasion, the rioters were silenced by a solemn exclamation from Johnson of "Quietoode, children—quietoode!" This startled the children into quietness for a moment, to be changed into more noise than ever. Johnson then repeated his admonition. This was strange conduct on the part of a servant; the man had always been most respectful.

"Did you notice Johnson's walk as he left the room?" said my wife. "Do you think he drinks?"

"Good gracious, no!" said I. "He seems the pink of propriety; still his manner is strange."

As the day wore on, Johnson's conduct became more eccentric. He was told to put some coals on the drawing-room fire.

"I positively decline to do so, sir."

"What!" said I; "you decline to——"

"Sir," interrupted Johnson, "I shall always be happy to obey all reasonable orders. If the fire wanted coals, I would willingly supply the want;

but such is not the casc—not the case! No, sir, not the case!" and the butler left the room, taking the coalscuttle with him.

"Why, what on earth has come to the man!" said I. "His conduct is only to be explained according to your theory; or else he is going off his head."

Johnson waited at our late dinner in his usual solemn manner, without a trace of any exceptional condition; but later in the evening, when it became Johnson's duty to fill the teapot with boiling water, he poured the water past the teapot, and was within an ace of scalding a child, who made a rapid escape from the butler's neighbourhood.

"Take care what you are about. You very nearly scalded that boy."

"That boy, sir, is always in the way. I never, in the whole course of my life, saw such a boy."

"Johnson," said I, "you are exceedingly disrespectful, and if you——"

"I disrespectful!" said the man, in accents of intense astonishment. "I have lived in the highest of families, and have always been treated with great respect. I little thought, sir, that I should be accused of that."

"Now," said my wife, "I hope you are satisfied that there is something very wrong about that man, and I hope you will get rid of him as soon as possible."

"Wait," said I; "we shall soon have further justification for sending him about his business, unless I am much mistaken."

I was sitting reading in my dining-room that same evening—somewhat absorbed in a novel by my old friend Wilkie Collins—when I was startled by a voice behind me. I turned and beheld Johnson, who said:

"You ought to go down on your bended knees every night of your life, and thank 'eaven which have blessed you with the extronary talents as has given you the power of prodoocing them pictures. Yes; there's the "Railway Station" with all them people. Why, it's wonderful! I really can't think 'ow it's all done. Oh, I don't think you are 'alf thankful enough, and it's my dooty to tell you."

"Have you quite finished?" said I.

"Finished?" hiccoughed my respectable butler—"finished what? What are you a-talking about, I should like to know? And permit me to take the present occasion to inform you"—here he paused, and attempted to fix me with a glassy eye—"that you have got a pack of noisy, impident children as deserves a precious good 'iding. I know I shall be 'itting some of 'em some day."

"Leave the room instantly!" said I. "You are drunk."

I never saw surprise more vividly expressed by a human face.

"*He says I'm* DRUNK! Me, James Johnson, which has 'ad the best of characters from——" Then savagely, "This 'ere's actionable." Then in bantering tones, "The next thing as you'll say is that I've bin and made away with your bit of plate. Ah, do!

There you go. Send for the detectives as you've done in the picture. Have me took up, and put in the picture. Why not, I should like to know?"

"Will you, or will you not, leave this room?"

"Don't be in a hurry. Wait a bit. Is that water as you've got there? Ah, it is." Then seizing a tumbler and the water-bottle, he succeeded in spilling some water into the tumbler, and much more on to the carpet, and then said, "I'm that thirsty; I think it must be that salt-beef."

"To-morrow morning," said I, "you will perhaps be sober enough to receive a notice to leave my service at once. Till then, I insist on your going to bed."

"I'm a-going, I'm a-going; and mind before you lays your head on to your pillow you take my advice, and thank 'eaven which has——"

Here Mr. Johnson, assisted by a push from me, staggered through the door, and went blundering down the passage to bed.

The subsequent career of my dignified butler is soon related. After making a futile attempt to get a character from me for "honesty, sobriety, etc," he gave up the idea of returning to domestic service, and acquired, in some way or other, an invalid Bath-chair, in which he induced several people in delicate health to entrust themselves. I have frequently met him with his invalid charges. He invariably stopped and pointed me out to his passenger, no doubt informing him or her, as the case might be, how little gratitude I felt for the talent which "'eaven had bestowed upon me."

His last feat was to drag an old lady into the middle of Hyde Park, leave her there, whilst he went to a public-house, got drunk, and forgot all about her. The invalid waited patiently for some time, at last got thoroughly frightened, and screamed till a policeman went to the rescue, and dragged the sick woman to her home. What became of the Bath-chair, this deponent knoweth not.

Of my last experience of the male domestic I have nothing but what is pleasant to say. Farrer—my third's name—was a steady young fellow, and a most excellent servant. He left me to "better himself," in which I hope he succeeded. With him I bid adieu for ever and a day to men-servants.

CHAPTER XIX.

"THE PRIVATE VIEW."

SEVEN years ago certain ladies delighted to display themselves at public gatherings in what are called æsthetic dresses; in some cases the costumes were pretty enough, in others they seemed to rival each other in ugliness of form and oddity of colour. There were — and still are, I believe — preachers of æstheticism in dress; but I think, and hope, that the preaching is much less effective than it used to be. The contrast between the really beautiful costumes of some of the lady *habituées* of our private view, and the eccentric garments of others, together with the opportunity offered for portraits of eminent persons, suggested a subject for a picture, and I hastened to avail myself of it. Beyond the desire of recording for posterity the æsthetic craze as regards dress, I wished to hit the folly of listening to self-elected critics in matters of taste, whether in dress or art. I therefore planned a group, consisting of a well-known apostle of the beautiful, with a herd of eager worshippers surrounding him. He is supposed to be explaining his theories to willing ears, taking

some picture on the Academy walls for his text. A group of well-known artists are watching the scene. On the left of the composition is a family of pure æsthetes absorbed in affected study of the pictures. Near them stands Anthony Trollope, whose homely figure affords a striking contrast to the eccentric forms near him. The rest of the composition is made up of celebrities of all kinds, statesmen, poets, judges, philosophers, musicians, painters, actors, and others. Miss Braddon—close to her Sir Julius Benedict—is talking to a friend. Mr. Gladstone shakes hands with Sir Stafford Northcote, Sir William Harcourt and Mr. Bright standing by. Mr. Browning talks to an æsthetic lady, whose draped back affords a chance of showing that view of the costume. Sir F. Leighton is in earnest conversation with Lady Lonsdale, who sits on one of the ottomans in the gallery not far from Lady Diana Huddleston, Baroness Burdett-Coutts, and others. Professor Huxley is prominent, as are also the Archbishop of York, Lord Coleridge, and Mrs. Langtry, Mr. Agnew (then M.P.), Baron Huddleston—by the latter stand Messrs. Tenniel and Du Maurier—and many others; amongst whom I must not forget Miss Ellen Terry and my old friends Irving and Sala. I received the kindest assistance from all these eminent persons, many of whom came to me at great sacrifice of time and engagements. Mr. Gladstone was one of the first to come, but his first sitting was cruelly short, as he was obliged to attend another appointment. How agreeable he can make himself goes

without saying. Wishing to catch an animated expression, I kept him in conversation, and in the course of it I made a somewhat trite remark upon the rarity of the numberless witticisms ascribed to different humourists having been actually heard at their inception, most of them I thought, and still think, being after-thoughts generated in seclusion. As an instance to the contrary, however, Mr. Gladstone told me the following:

Sir Francis Burdett began his public life as a pronounced *patriot*, and suffered, as is well known, by imprisonment in the Tower for proceedings arising out of his too demonstrative patriotism. In after-life, however, the patriot changed into something so opposed to his former inclining, as to betray him, during a furious harangue in Parliament, into expressions that were scarcely parliamentary; for in condemning a measure that was before the House of too radical a kind, which had received the warm support of a member noted for his ultra-Liberal principles, Sir Francis concluded his speech by exclaiming that "of all the *cants* in the world, the *cant* of *patriotism* was the most intolerable, not to say *disgusting*." Lord John Russell rose to reply, and after doing his best to traverse the argument of Sir F. Burdett, concluded his speech in the following words: "There is one thing, however, in which I entirely agree with the honourable gentleman. I think, with him, that the cant of patriotism is intolerable, and even, to use his own expression, disgusting; but I venture to say that there is some-

thing even more intolerable and more disgusting, and that is the RECant of patriotism."

In support of Mr. Gladstone's theory I gave him the following instance of ready wit. I forget in what year it was that I exhibited a picture that obtained a large share of popular approval. It was shown at the Royal Academy, and on the private-view day I met Mr. Bernal Osborne, who, a day or two before, had convulsed the House of Commons by one of his witty and brilliant speeches. He complimented me very much on my picture, and I very sincerely returned his compliments, with interest, on his speech.

"I will tell you what," said he, "I will exchange my tongue for your *palette*."

If this be original, and I have no reason to doubt it, the reply was so good as to excuse my repeating so palpable a compliment to myself. Exceptions, however, prove the rule, and the instances are indeed rare of witty sayings being heard by myself at their birth.

Another example to the contrary from a man I knew intimately, who was celebrated for his brilliant conversational powers—namely, the late Shirley Brooks—may be mentioned here.

In the course of a conversation on poets and poetry, the merits of a gentleman, whose writings display a warmth which many of his readers think hails from a place unmentionable to ears polite, were nearly as warmly discussed.

"Not a poet at all?" said one admirer, in reply to an audacious unbeliever; "why, the man was born a

poet! and if ever man proved the truth of the adage, 'Poeta nascitur, non fit,' X—— is that man."

"So he is," said Brooks; "he is a poet of nastiness not fit for publication." Surely a witty play upon the Latin words.

One more example is, I think, all I can remember.

Amongst our friends was a young gentleman who rejoiced in a nose so "tip-tilted"—to use Tennyson's phrase—as to be very remarkable indeed for that peculiarity. He received numerous quips about his unfortunate feature, and accepted them with good humour, except on one occasion, when he said gravely:

"I say, look here; I object to your making my nose a subject of conversation."

"That is unfortunate," replied his friend; "we wanted a subject, and we took the first that *turned up*."

To return to "The Private View."

Whilst painting this picture I was not a great employer of the "artist's model," except for some of the æsthetes, the principal one being a portrait of a young person named Jenny Trip. Miss Trip was a trial to me. Never did she "come to her time." Her conversational powers were *nil*. Nothing that I could say seemed to interest her in the slightest degree, and, unless I spoke, silence reigned. She had a pretty, pensive face, on which a smile seemed as much out of place as it would be on the face of a mute at a funeral. This most provoking smile was more especially irritating when it was the only reply to a terrific scolding.

"What is your father?" said I to her one day, when she came into my studio two hours late.

"He is a stoker on the Chatham and Dover line."

"How early does he get to his work?"

"He goes out at five in the morning."

"Indeed," said I; "and his daughter—that is you—cannot get to your work by ten. You ought to be ashamed of yourself."

Not a word of excuse. She smiled. I made a mental vow that, once the æsthete was finished, my acquaintance with Miss Trip should finish too. That happy moment came at last; there was but little to do, and for that little my smiling friend was not absolutely necessary.

"As you find it impossible to get here by ten, perhaps you can come at two to-morrow?"

She said she could, and smiled.

"Now observe, Miss Trip," said I, "if you are not punctual to-morrow you will be sent away."

She smiled again, and departed.

I then told my servant that unless the young lady was within a quarter of an hour of the time fixed, she was not to be admitted.

I allowed two o'clock to pass, and at three, my servant happening to come into my room, I asked after Miss Jenny Trip.

"She has just been, and gone again, sir."

"What did she say when you told her you had orders to send her away because she was after her time?"

"She didn't say anything, sir; she only smiled."

My sole contribution to the Exhibition of 1882 was a portrait of Miss Emily Levy, an old and valued friend. With that exception, and another in the form of a portrait of Mrs. Lee, a great part of the year 1881, and nearly the whole of 1882, was spent on the picture of "The Private View."

In the course of a summer holiday spent in Switzerland in 1882, a little subject was suggested by the mode adopted for carrying ladies up the mountains. The fair traveller sits in a wooden chair, which is supported on two long poles, and carried by relays of porters, one at each end. This method of locomotion is apt to remind one of the 5th of November; but I thought that a pretty bride, with a manly bridegroom, to say nothing of the picturesque porters and the still more picturesque surroundings, might produce a pleasing subject; and there were the advantages in it, very valuable in my eyes, of its being a subject of modern life. This picture, with Mrs. Lee's portrait, and "The Private View," formed my contributions to the Exhibition of 1883. Pictures composed of groups of well-known people are always very popular at the Academy, and "The Private View" was no exception to that rule, a guard being again found necessary to control the crowds of visitors. I may perhaps be pardoned for recording the fact of this picture being the sixth painted by me that has received this special compliment.

CHAPTER XX.

DR. DORAN.

When I assert that story-telling is a difficult art, I only repeat a truism. A man may be what is commonly called "full of anecdote," but he may also be, from various causes, quite unable to tell a story properly. He may be of a nervous temperament, and forget the point of his anecdote before he has got half-way through it, and his audience may decline to be interested—interrupt him by conversation with one another—and at last leave him high and dry without a listener. Or a disturbing feeling may come over him that he has told the same anecdote to the same people before. These and other interruptions so often affect the *raconteur* as to paralyze him, and cause many a good story to fall stillborn upon his audience. But of all story-tellers, save me from the man who, with loud and persistent voice, takes the company by the throat, and, like Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner," compels them to listen to a long tirade, dull and pointless, and to his own screeching laugh at the end of it. No good *raconteur* ever laughs at his own funny anecdotes. Why should he? He has

surely often heard them before, and if he who roars at his own wit, or at the absence of it, knew how much the fun of a story is increased by the relater being apparently unconscious of there being anything to laugh at, he would acquire such a command over his risible muscles as should enable him to relate the most side-splitting matter without a smile. The great comic actors well know the truth of this. Liston—one of the greatest I ever saw—was never known to smile upon the stage. His long, solemn face might have become the pulpit as he surveyed his audience after convulsing them with a display of his refined and exquisite humour. He whose name heads this chapter was not only a good story-teller, but he was, as my readers may know, an admirable writer. An Irishman by birth, he possessed much of Irish fun and humour. He was unceasingly industrious, producing a vast amount of literary work, always entertaining and instructive. Before he was twenty years old, John Doran, afterwards known to his friends and the world as Dr. Doran, was a successful contributor to various periodicals. Being entirely dependent on his own exertions, he found that some more efficient means of support must be secured than those offered by small literary successes; he, therefore, eagerly accepted the post of private tutor in the family of Lord Glenlyon, afterwards Duke of Athole. For several years after the completion of the education of Lord Glenlyon, Doran was similarly employed in the family of Mr. Lascelles, afterwards Earl of Harewood. From that happy

home he transferred himself to Blandford, in Dorsetshire, where for a short time he had the charge of Lord Portman's sons. Overwork produced temporary illness, and, yielding to advice, Doran went abroad, and spent the following two or three years on the Continent.

It was during this holiday that our traveller took a doctor's degree—after passing a sharp examination—in the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Marburg, thus acquiring the title by which he was always known. On his return to England in perfectly restored health—having not only been blessed in that without which all else is nothing, but with a young and pretty wife also—the Doctor felt that the time had arrived when he must select a way of living, and resolutely persevere in it. An opportunity of Church preferment was offered to him by his friend Lord Harewood, but respectfully declined, and literature, in a wide acceptation of the word, was fixed for his pursuit.

It is not my intention to follow my dear old friend through his early struggles and disappointments to his final successes. Dr. Doran was known everywhere as the author of many popular books when I first made his acquaintance. There was so much sympathy between us that our acquaintance soon ripened into intimacy, and intimacy into the warmest friendship. Doran had a great love of art, and I think a desire that I should paint a picture from some anecdote, historical or other, in one of his books. He proposed several to me, but they had the fault of

all suggested by literary men, from Dickens downwards, that of needing the traditional balloon from the mouths of the figures to explain the action of the piece. I found one for myself, however, from the book in which Nell Gwynne figures as an orange-girl at the Duke's Theatre. She is represented offering her fruit to a box full of gallants, and some of her impudent wit with it. I had the honour and pleasure of finding one of my old friend's books, "Mann and Manners at the Court of Florence," dedicated to me.

But it is with Doran socially that I now desire to deal. He was a delightful companion, as many a day's walk with him proved to me. His stories were inexhaustible, actors or singers often being the subjects. Doran had frequently witnessed Rachel's chief performances, and always spoke enthusiastically of her powers. Of that remarkable person he used to tell the following story.

According to Doran, Rachel began public life as a child street singer and reciter, and one day he—then a very young man—made one of a crowd on a certain boulevard in Paris, who stood listening to the wonderful child. A middle-aged woman was with the girl, her mother evidently, from the easily traced resemblance between the two. The woman played some instrument in the way of accompaniment to the child's sweet voice, and when the performance was over, the girl went amongst the crowd to collect their pence in a small quaintly-shaped wooden pail which she carried for the purpose. Her dress was

ragged, but clean, consisting of a short petticoat covered by a pelisse common to the time. Many years after this, Dr. Doran visited Paris, and found Rachel at the head of her profession, and a world's wonder. He made her acquaintance, and to his great delight received an invitation to a *réunion* at her house. "And what an assembly it was!" said Doran. "Your profession, dear boy, represented by the best painters in Paris—in short, some of the best of everything." Rachel was sumptuously attired, receiving her guests with the simplest grace—not a trace of the theatre. Soon after the last arrival the great actress disappeared, to the surprise of her guests; and their surprise was increased when a tall figure, unmistakably that of Rachel, dressed in a ragged petticoat and wearing an old-fashioned pelisse, attended by a shabby old woman with a guitar, appeared in their midst. A wondering circle was made quickly round the strange couple. A few notes upon the guitar by very feeble fingers, then, amidst breathless silence, the tremendous scene from "Phèdre." "We had not recovered from the effects," said Doran, "when Rachel produced the little wooden pail I well remembered, and came smiling and begging among us. I think it was pretty well filled; when she held it high, saying, '*Pour les pauvres;*' she then left us, and returned in a few minutes in her former dress."

Another story occurs to me. It goes without saying that Dr. Doran, being a sensible man, did not believe in table-rapping as a spiritual manifestation,

and he had a supreme contempt for all such believers. Amongst his acquaintance, however, there were three gentlemen, great friends, who to various similarities of taste, added a belief in spirits, fervent in all three. One of these gentlemen, who enjoyed feeble health (as Doran put it), was a collector of curios of all kinds—a few pictures, Louis Quatorze clocks and snuff-boxes, Venetian glass, oak cabinets, ancient armour, and the like. The virtuoso's health became worse and worse till he died, leaving his two spiritual friends executors. To soften as much as possible the grief of the survivors, the sick man assured them that though they would shortly see the last of his body, his spirit would be in constant communication with them, and they might depend on his putting in an appearance either through a table or some other medium, whenever they chose to call upon him. What an ordinary being would have considered of greater value was a substantial recognition of both his brother believers in his will. To one he left certain clocks and snuff-boxes, to the other some indifferent pictures and some oak-work and armour.

"With the ungrateful inconsistency common to human nature," Doran said, "he thought the armour man was disappointed that he didn't get a clock, and the snuff-box legatee that a suit of armour was not left to him." Be that as it may, there is no doubt that very soon after the property had been divided, he who had inherited the armour received a communication from the dead telling him to go at once to the other legatee and inform him that a certain

snuff-box, set with small diamonds and containing a miniature of the Duchesse de la Vallière in the lid, was left to him by mistake, the devisor fully intending it for his other friend, to whom the possessor in error was desired to resign it.

This story was fully credited, and the command respectfully obeyed; so easily, indeed, that the "armour man" again summoned the dead, when, "from information received," it appeared another mistake had been made. Yet another and more valuable "object" was bequeathed in error.

"It is really strange, my dear friend," said he of the armour to him of the snuff-boxes. "I had a delightful communication from our benefactor and friend last night, and was again assured that a certain plaque had been left to you in error—it was intended for me."

"Did the spirit of our departed friend tell you that?" was the astonished inquiry.

"He did," was the reply.

"But the plaque was not left to me at all; Brown got that," said he of the snuff-boxes.

"Dear, dear!" said the armour man. "Then the spirit must have been the devil, and not our friend at all."

"Suppose it must," replied the other.

Doran was not only a good story-teller, but an appreciative listener to others. I cannot refrain from relating a somewhat personal incident that amused him, and may amuse my readers. Two of my children —a boy and a girl—when very small, but just old

enough to be trusted alone in the streets, were wandering in Kensington Gardens Terrace, and as they walked slowly past the big houses they looked through the area railings into the kitchens, and speculated upon the objects on the various spits. Presently they came to a joint that puzzled them. One said it was mutton, the other averred with much persistence that it was beef. "You are both wrong," said the voice of the owner of the house from the dining-room window; "it is pork."

With the publication of the two following letters, I close my recollections of Dr. Doran. My remembrance of his kindness to me on all occasions, my respect for his talents, and my love for the man will abide with me so long as "memory holds her seat."

The first letter relates to a little party given to celebrate the marriage of my second daughter:

"*Athenæum* Office,
"20, Wellington Street, Strand, W.C.,
"12th August, 1869.

"DEAR MRS. FRITH,

"While I am sitting here waiting for proofs—but now I think of it, I am not sitting *here*, but at the printing office in Tooke's Court, just in front of a Sponging House; however, while I am waiting for proofs, my thoughts go back to the charming scene which your hospitable house presented on Tuesday night. I take this opportunity to congratulate you on its perfect success. That it was thoroughly successful in good taste and all the means and

appliances for enjoyment, was the joyous opinion of every one with whom I came in contact. For my part, when I think of those incomparable bridesmaids, I feel that the world is not so well-ordered as it might be, and that it is a pity we can't be always young and in love for ever, living also rent-free, including Queen's taxes!

"May the lives of the two young people, for whose sake all that youth, beauty, and friendship were assembled within that Arabian Nights sort of tent, be as happy as could be desired by those who are nearest and dearest to them both! May I add that you may as well let the tent stand and keep the lights ready? for sisters follow sisters, and the inevitable man and the hour *will* come.

"Do not think of troubling yourself to answer this. I send it in place of the silent courtesy of a card, and in acknowledgment of one of the most brilliant and enjoyable of evenings. With best regards to Mr. Frith,

"I am, dear Mrs. Frith,

"Very sincerely yours,

"J. DORAN."

"33, Lansdowne Road, W.,
"8th July, 1870.

"DEAR MRS. FRITH,

"'Oh, that I were a glove upon that hand!'"

is what Romeo said when he wanted Juliet's *number*.

"I have been mentally standing below your con-

servatory looking up towards your imaginary figure, and saying the same words for the same purpose.

"As Romeo afterwards says—

"'Oh, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?'

I conclude Juliet would not give her *number;* and I may go on metaphorically gazing up at you in the conservatory with the same result. So I must ask you to let me acquit myself of my lost bet by substituting the enclosed in place of the fairly forfeited pair of gloves, and to believe me, dear Mrs. Frith,

"Very sincerely yours,

"J. DORAN."

CHAPTER XXI.

MY LATER PROFESSIONAL WORK.

REVISITING the scenes of one's youth is always a melancholy pleasure, and often no pleasure at all, but much the reverse. In my vacation-time of 1884 I visited Harrogate. I experienced the "melancholy pleasure" in the fullest sense, for I found that all the friends I knew long ago had joined the majority. My father's hotel, the Dragon, instead of being, as I remember it, filled with health and pleasure seekers, gay with all the gaiety of a fashionable watering-place, was deserted by all but a caretaker, closed as an inn, windows broken, and desolate. I was allowed to go over it, in the charge of a slipshod girl. I revisited the little room in which my supposed genius first saw the light. It was unaltered, though more than half a century had passed since I made the terrible drawing of a dog that astonished the world—of Harrogate. On several of the window-panes, at the back of the house, were names of visitors, diamond-scratched, and dated a century and more ago. There were my own and my brothers', in childish writing. The

ballroom—a large and really splendid room when in its right mind—was in the last stage of decay, the walls mouldy, and the floor in holes. And what lovely forms have I not seen quadrilling, waltzing, and minuetting on these boards, now so rotten! The mystery of the house being allowed to totter on its poor last legs in this melancholy fashion will soon be solved by time, a solution imminent in cracked ceilings and partially fallen roof. I turned away from "the home of my childhood" a sadder, if not a wiser man.

As I approach the present time, I feel more and more reluctant to speak of myself and my doings. I am thoroughly tired of the first person singular, and shall content myself by noting very shortly my professional work of the last few years. The success of "Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Siddons," a capital subject, taken from a passage in Campbell's life of the great actress, was, however, unquestionable.

Nollekens' bust of Johnson, together with Reynolds' portraits of the great writer, supplied me with sufficient authority for his likeness, while that of Mrs. Siddons was as easily derived from Gainsborough and others. This picture was a favourite with those people whose opinion is most worthy of consideration—that of my brother artists. I had often felt a desire to paint a "Statute Fair," and after twice witnessing that held annually at Warwick, and making many studies and an elaborate sketch for it, and even commencing a large picture of the subject, bad times came and frightened me, and the

picture was dropped—never to be taken up again, I fear. Then my evil destiny tempted me into the domain of history, and nothing would satisfy me but I must try my hand at Cromwell contemplating the dead body of Charles I. It is related that after that monarch's execution his body was taken into a gallery at Whitehall, and watched there all night by two of his friends. Those gentlemen were sitting over the fire in the dead of night, when a footstep was heard approaching the room. The door opened, and a man entered muffled in a cloak. He approached the body, contemplated it for some minutes, and then, muttering the words "Cruel necessity," left as silently as he had entered, but not before he had been recognised as Cromwell.

I have to acknowledge, then, that my contributions to the Royal Academy show of 1884 were of very scant attraction, "Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Siddons" being the only one that, coming as it did within the scope of my powers, proved successful. Again I plunged into history, and planned a large composition from an incident in the life of John Knox. It may be remembered that one of my earlier pictures represented "Knox reproving Queen Mary." My present venture showed that zealot reproving the ladies of her Court for amusing themselves by playing at a harmless game. Knox had just left the Queen in a passion of tears, caused by his brutal attacks, and in passing through an ante-chamber—still in existence—filled with courtiers, pages, and ladies, he was, or pretended to be, shocked

into the use of his usual strong language at the sight of "Youth on the prow, and Pleasure at the helm."

Many of the young students of the present day will perhaps be surprised to hear that it was my custom, and that of my friends, to make nude studies of all the figures in our pictures before we proceeded to clothe them; the advantage of the method being a safeguard, to a great extent, against disproportion and false action. I regret to say I have discontinued the practice, but the habit of making numbers of chalk-studies for the final oil-sketch is still *de rigueur* with me. In the Knox sketch I introduced the figure of a jester who stands by the preacher in a mocking attitude, as he turns to admonish the young revellers. The contrast of the colour of the jester with the black figure of the preacher was very valuable. But as I worked, the idea crossed my mind that there was no record of a jester being at the Court of the Queen of Scots, nor could I satisfy myself that the reign of Elizabeth was similarly distinguished; but if Henry VIII. had his Will Somers, why might not his niece of Scotland have her jester also? To what better authority could I turn than to Mr. Froude, whose works had given me so much instruction and pleasure, and from whom I had already gleaned one historic subject? I wrote to that distinguished person, and received a reply to the effect that jesters were never known north of the Tweed.

The result of this letter was the disappearance of the jester from the picture, a red chair taking his place; but I allowed him to remain in the first

sketch, now in the possession of Mr. Flowers, of Stratford-on-Avon. Next to having a photograph of the scene of Darnley's murder, a drawing, taken on the morning after the explosion at Kirk o' Field, lent to me by Mr. Froude, was most awe-inspiring by its terrible fidelity. There lay Darnley as the murderers had left him, *strangled*, the body evidently undisturbed to enable the artist to do his work. The Prince's page lay at a little distance; the fragments of Darnley's lodging forming the background, combined with hedges, and a fringe of frightened spectators. The original drawing was sent to England for Queen Elizabeth's inspection immediately after the murder of Darnley, and is now in the Record Office. That lent to me by Mr. Froude is an exact copy.

Though this drawing is not the work of an accomplished artist, it bears marks of authenticity and truth-telling, so far as the producer's powers enabled him to go; it is in water-colours, and it seems to me to dispose altogether of the theory of Darnley's being blown up by the gunpowder that destroyed the house, for the body is unmutilated and unblackened, neither of which conditions could it have escaped if the death had been caused by an explosive. The unfortunate Prince had evidently heard the murderers at work in the room beneath his own; he then endeavoured to escape, and was killed in the attempt.

Of course the study of the locality in which the scene selected for my picture occurred, entailed the necessity of a journey to Holyrood. There I found

the large anteroom in which the Queen's Marys and their friends talked and worked, danced and trifled; and that terrible little inner chamber, now so "worn upon the edge of time," where the Queen, sitting at supper with Rizzio, was startled by the white face of Ruthven, newly risen from his sick-bed, armed, though too weak to stand upright in armour, heading the furious band bent on the death of the Italian favourite. The room is little bigger than a cupboard; how easy to realize the struggle—the supper-table overthrown, the attendant lady screaming for assistance, the terrified musician clinging to his royal mistress, whilst he receives stab after stab from the daggers of his murderers! The body was dragged across the ante-chamber and left bleeding in a room beyond—blood-stains, or what pass for such, remaining on the floor to this day.

A story is told of a traveller for a firm—which dealt, amongst other things, in a composition famous for its power of removing stains of any sort from all kinds of materials—who, in the temporary absence of the then custodian of Holyrood, applied his stain-remover to Rizzio's blood. He was discovered on his knees by the indignant guardian, vigorously rubbing the floor. His panacea failed—either from his being too soon disturbed in the application of it, or from the fact that the stain was too deep to be affected. The man was expelled from the palace, and Rizzio's blood still remains one of the most attractive sights for tourists.

My first acquaintance with this incident arose

from a sketch which a young artist brought to me for my advice as to whether or not it was worthy of being made into a large picture. The firm's traveller was depicted, as I have described him, scouring the floor, or rather interrupted in his work by an old lady, who—according to my artist friend—was many years ago in sole charge of Holyrood. She was represented in a great passion. I think I advised the artist to inquire further into the truth of the story before he gave it permanent form as a large picture.

CHAPTER XXII

A STRANGE PURCHASE.

If the "Bond Street lounger" of fifty years ago could revisit that street, he would scarcely recognise the scene of his youth. I can well remember it, and I think I can safely assert that there was not a picture-shop in the whole length of it. Now they are to be counted by scores, to say nothing of the galleries that abound. As a rule, the magnates of the trade do not expose their treasures to the gaze of the passer-by; and in the exceptional instances when a shop is permitted to display a tolerable specimen of art in its window, there is sure to be a gallery behind, in which purchasers will often find works by the best masters of the English and foreign schools. A picture-dealer, whom I shall call Stokes, was a few years ago the proprietor of a large shop with a gallery at the rear of it. The period was August, the season was over, and business as well. Mr. Stokes was on the point of leaving town for his usual holiday, when a man entered the shop, and asked if he could speak to Mr. Stokes.

"You can," was the reply. "I am Mr. Stokes. What can I do for you?"

Judging from the visitor's appearance, there seemed no chance of a revival of business by anything that could be done for him. He was palpably of the Jewish persuasion, and his dress had evidently been worn for years.

"You buy pictures?" said the Israelite, looking about him.

"Yes, I do, if they are the right sort."

"Well, now, if I was to put you up to a picture by Gainsborough, what would you stand?"

"A picture by Gainsborough?" said the dealer. "What sort of a picture?"

"Beautiful—size of life—lovely woman."

"And do you mean to say you have got such a picture?"

"No, I don't mean to say *I* have; but some friends of mine have, and I can put you up to it if you will make it worth my while."

"An original by Gainsborough," murmured Mr. Stokes; "a whole length of a lovely woman. Well, you can show it to me, and if I buy it I will give you five-and twenty pounds."

"Done with you," said the man. "I have a cab at the door; jump in with me, and I'll take you to the picture."

"Why, where on earth are we going to?" exclaimed Mr. Stokes, as the cab entered the back slums of Seven Dials.

"It's all right, governor; we shall be there directly. You are all right. I'll pay the cab."

And almost as the man spoke, the cab drew up at

a small shop. The picture-dealer had time to notice that the establishment was one for the sale of imitation antique furniture and common bric-à-brac, as he passed through the shop, and followed his guide up some rickety stairs to a room above, where a strange sight awaited him. On a sideboard of exquisite workmanship masses of silver plate and china were piled. It required but one glance of his experienced eye to recognise the originality of the antique silver and the value of the china. There were pieces of rare tapestry nailed tentatively against the wall, and to crown all, a magnificent Gainsborough, which, as Stokes expressed it to me, "seemed to lighten up the whole place."

The first thought that passed into my friend's mind was that he had fallen among thieves, and that he must assure himself that the picture had been honestly come by before he could venture to make an offer for it. He must be cautious also not to display too much eagerness to possess it, or the price might be made prohibitive. At a table in the middle of the room sat an old man of repulsive aspect, with a long gray beard. Close to his hand was a catalogue.

"I conclude," said the old man, in a voice that at once betrayed his Jewish antecedents, "that I have the honour of speaking to the celebrated Mr. Stokes."

"I have come here at the request of this per— this gentleman, to see a Gainsborough. Is that the picture?"

"*That* is the picture, and I need not tell so good a judge as Mr. Stokes that it is——"

"Well, allow me to ask where you got it, and all about it, before we talk about what you want for it, because you see——"

"I understand," interrupted the Jew in his turn; "you think we stole it—don't you now?" smiling as he made the remark. "And when I tell you there is a gang of five of us in it, you will be sure we did—won't you now?"

"Not a bit of it," said Stokes, "but as a prudent man I must be careful that nobody can have a claim on whatever I buy, after I have paid for it; and you must admit this is not exactly the locality in which one would expect to see a Gainsborough—if it is a Gainsborough—and whether it is or not, times are so bad that unless it can be had very reasonably, and a clean bill of health with it, I don't care about it."

"I don't blame you, sir; I don't blame you—far from it. If you will just look over this catalogue you will see for yourself—here you are—effects, plate, china, tapestry, furniture, horses, carriages, noble family, Buckinghamshire. There is some of the plate"—pointing to the sideboard—"tapestry and pictures; some more there in the corner with their backs to you, not in your way, old family portraits—not good, any of 'em. I went to the castle myself; nobody there; things given away, sir—literally given away. And look here—here it is—I bought that splendid Gainsborough for six guineas!"

Mr. Stokes told me he could scarcely believe his eyes when he saw the confirmation of the man's story.

"What do you want for it?"

"Well," said the old gentleman, smiling, "I told you there were five of us in it, and we want thirty pounds apiece; five thirties is a hundred and fifty."

Now, said Stokes to himself, be not too eager; above all, do not go away without the picture.

"A hundred and fifty pounds seems a good deal; a goodish profit that for a six-pound investment. It's a big picture, and size is always against the selling of a thing. Well, I don't know, I suppose I must risk it; will you take my cheque?"

"Certainly," said the man.

"All right," said Stokes; "got pen and ink handy? But how," said Stokes, pausing pen in hand, "am I to get it home? Seems a good deal of money. Could you get me a van, or a light cart, or something, so that I could see to it myself?"

"You shall have one at the door in ten minutes," was the reply.

"When I stood up that Gainsborough in the splendid light in my gallery, Mr. Frith (you know the picture), you may imagine how pleased I was. It was my dinner-time, and I treated myself to an extra glass of sherry to celebrate my purchase. Just as I had finished my dinner, my man Smith came up to me and told me that Lord —— was in

the gallery, and wanted to speak to me. Lord —— is an old customer of mine. Down I went, and found him absorbed in the Gainsborough.

"'A new purchase this, Mr. Stokes?'

"'Yes, my lord; it hasn't been in the place an hour.'

"'Gainsborough, of course,' said his lordship.

"'Yes, my lord, and one of the finest in England.'

"'Am I right in supposing the picture is for sale? if so, what is the price?'

"'A thousand guineas, my lord.'

"'I will take it; and will you have the frame re-gilt? and if you think a little cleaning or varnishing desirable, I know I can trust you to see to all that sort of thing. I leave town this evening. You will be so good as to let me know when the picture can be sent to Eaton Place.'"

Lord —— went to his country-house, where he was attacked by fever, and died in a few days. The frame of the Gainsborough was regilt, and the picture varnished, when so much additional splendour was developed as to cause Mr. Stokes many pangs of regret at its precipitate sale. Though Lord —— had died, his executors were, of course, responsible for the purchase of the picture, and Mr. Stokes was on the point of writing to offer them a release from the engagement, when he received a letter, informing him that Lord —— had made his purchase known to several persons before his death, and his executors fully acknowledged their liability; but they were instructed to express a hope that,

under the circumstances, Mr. Stokes would not press the purchase upon them, in consideration of the many satisfactory business transactions that had passed between him and Lord —— in times past. To this letter Mr. Stokes replied by return of post. And after expressing great (and I am sure real) regret at the untimely death of his patron, he hoped he was the last man in the world to insist on the fulfilment of a contract under such melancholy circumstances, etc. To this came a reply to the effect that Lord ——'s family fully appreciated Mr. Stokes' ready consent to their wishes, and the greatest compliment they could pay his conduct on this occasion was to describe it as worthy of Mr. Stokes.

"Now," said Mr. Stokes, "anybody who takes a fancy to my Gainsborough will not get it for a thousand guineas, nor anything like it."

The beautiful lady had displayed her charms in my friend's gallery but a few days, when she was discovered by a well-known noble collector, a real lover of art, but a rough one.

"Hallo, Stokes! what have you got there?"

"I need not tell your Grace; you know well enough."

"Gainsborough, ain't it? Not such a bad one. What have you the impudence to ask for it?"

"Three thousand guineas."

"Rubbish!"

"No, your Grace, three thousand *guineas!*" (emphasis on guineas).

"I wish you may get it."

"So do I, your Grace; and if I don't, I intend to keep the picture."

"Well, what's new? What else have you to show me?"

Though the picture-dealer produced several treasures for the Duke's inspection, he found his noble patron gave them but a wandering attention, ever and anon casting longing eyes in the direction of the lovely Gainsborough. Stokes felt that the blow had struck deep, and that he must play a waiting game.

"Now you don't really suppose that there is a fool in the world big enough to pay such an unconscionable sum as that you ask for the Gainsborough—do you?"

"Perhaps not, but I am not fool enough to sell it for less."

"Suppose me such an idiot—only suppose, mind—as to offer you two thousand five hundred pounds for it, what then?"

"Why then, your Grace, I should decline to take it."

"Hum—ah—let me see—did you get me that proof of 'Nelly O'Brien' that was sold the other day?"

"Yes, your Grace; here it is, and a splendid impression indeed."

"So it is; much obl*ee*ged to you. Well, I must be off. Cold August, isn't it? Did you get the grouse I sent you? All right—no thanks. Fact is,

we killed such a lot, didn't know who to send em to." The shop-door was now very near, when the Duke said: "That infernal picture has fascinated me. I will give you three thousand pounds for it."

"No, your Grace; you must excuse me. If you or anyone else were to offer me three thousand one hundred and twenty pounds, I should refuse it. My price is three thousand guineas, and I will never take one farthing less."

"Well, of all the unconscionable—I know I am a fool—but—well—send her home!"

A few years ago the lovely Gainsborough was exhibited in the Winter Exhibition of Old Masters, at Burlington House, and greatly admired by numbers who would have been as much surprised as I was, if they could have heard this true story of a "Strange Purchase."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE CRAZY ARTIST.

FROM time immemorial famous artists have, on convenient occasions, given willing counsel to their younger and less known brethren in the conduct of their pictures. Lawrence, Reynolds, West, and many others, frequently devoted a morning hour to receive students, whose drawings, sketches or pictures were discussed, changes recommended, and suggestions made. The practice obtains to some extent in the present day ; and another has arisen, less commendable, namely, a habit of submitting pictures to Academicians, pointedly to those who happen to be members of the Hanging Committee, a few days before "sending-in day." The avowed object, that of seeking advice, may be doubted, because no time is left to take advantage of it ; and an answer to the inevitable question, "Do you think my picture will be accepted ?" is embarrassing in the extreme ; peculiarly so if addressed to him who may be one of the temporary judges in the matter.

The annals of the Royal Academy might disclose strange stories of pictures being rejected twice, and

even thrice, and accepted at last. I may record an instance that occurred in my own early experience. I formed one of the Council in 1854, when a life-size portrait of Thomas Carlyle came before us; the picture seemed to me to possess considerable merit, and I was surprised at its immediate rejection. In the following year the same picture was presented, and apparently unrecognised by those who had previously rejected it; this time it was marked "doubtful," but it was not hung. My two years' service in Council being over, I knew nothing of the fate of any picture till the opening of the Exhibition. My surprise may be imagined when I saw the twice unsuccessful portrait in one of the principal places on the walls in Trafalgar Square. I have since seen the artist, and he assured me that the picture was never retouched between the time of its first rejection and its ultimate success. The strangest of all the strange experiences of my artistic career occurred to me some time ago.

A few weeks before "sending-in day," I received a letter from a stranger with the usual request that I would give my opinion on some pictures intended for Burlington House. I consented, little dreaming of what I was about to bring upon myself. The would-be exhibitor arrived punctually at the time named, bringing three pictures carefully covered up. He was a tall, pale, melancholy-looking young man, and he prefaced the sight of his pictures by telling me that he had passed twenty-five years in severe study of art (this staggered me, as he looked

scarcely twenty-five), that he had frequently attempted to exhibit his works at different galleries, but, from some extraordinary malign influence, they were invariably rejected; and he would be extremely grateful to me if I would tell him candidly if the fault rested with his pictures, or with those who could not, or would not, see their merits. In reply to my request for a sight of his work, he placed something upon my easel that only required a glance to convince me that I was in the presence of a madman. I confess to a sensation of fear. What the artist called a picture, was a piece of canvas about three feet long by two feet wide, covered with oblong and irregular blocks of thick black and yellow paint, smeared over here and there by a grayish-yellow mess like gooseberry-fool. When I could speak, I said:

"What is it?"

"That picture," said the young man, "is 'A Reminiscence of Kamschatka.'"

"Have you ever been there?" said I, in a faint voice.

"Never," was the reply.

"Well, then, how can it be a reminis——"

"Oh," he interrupted, "it is not finished; it is quite wet. Here, you can feel for yourself; the paint is not dry. Don't be afraid of touching the picture; you won't hurt it." I did not dare to refuse, so I put my finger into one of the black blocks, and found it wet enough. "Do you think when it is finished that the Academy will accept it?" inquired my visitor.

"I really cannot give an opinion; the Committee is so uncertain in its decisions."

How on earth shall I get rid of this poor fellow? was my constant thought during this painful interview.

"The subject is quite new," said the artist; "the country unexplored by the wielder of the pencil. You will perhaps permit me to show you my second attempt."

I assented; "Kamschatka" was removed, to be succeeded by a larger canvas, in form upright, looking precisely like "Kamschatka" turned the other way. A broad streak of vermilion with a black dab at the top of it, exactly in the middle of similar black and yellow blocks smeared as before with gooseberry-fool; no attempt at representing a building, or a tree, or, in short, anything in heaven above or the earth beneath. Again my question:

"What is it?"

"That represents 'Moses descending from Mount Sinai with the Tables of the Law.'"

"Where is Moses?" I inquired.

"Where!" in rather a loud voice; "why," pointing to the smear of vermilion, "there, sir! surely he cannot be mistaken."

"But I cannot see the tables," I pleaded.

"How can anybody see what is not to be seen?" said the artist. "Moses holds the tables in front of him as he addresses the Israelites. His back is towards us; how then could you by any possibility see what he carries before him?"

"Very true indeed," said I; "and," pointing to black masses of dirty paint, "those are the Israelites."

"Oh, oh, you can see the Israelites, then!" in a mocking tone; "I am glad of that."

"And there is the mountain," said I, making another guess.

"No, sir; that is an attempt to reproduce the cloudless sky of—of—Egypt. Was it? I forget."

"But you have made your sky rather yellow, haven't you?"

"Yellow! no; blue, sir, blue! How is it possible you can call it yellow? the ultramarine used on that sky cost me five pounds."

As I found nothing more to say about the "Moses," I asked for the next and last specimen, and was somewhat relieved to find, when it was placed on the easel, that there was a circular form, about the size of a shilling, doing duty for the moon, with a dirty streak across it, made of some gray mess evidently intended for a cloud.

"Ah," said I, "the moon—a moonlight scene, is it not?"

"Yes, shipwreck by moonlight," said the painter.

Again the black and yellow blocks covered the canvas—precisely like those in the reminiscences of Kamschatka, Mount Sinai, and the Israelites—forming a rather larger and more jumbled-together mass in front.

"What is that?" said I, pointing to the foreground.

"These are the rocks on which, as you see, the

ill-fated vessel is driving, and unless the wind changes she must be wrecked. Really, sir, you must excuse me, but I fear your eyesight must be failing!"

"Well," said I, peering through my spectacles, "it is not so good as it was; and for the life of me I can't see the ship."

"You can't see the ship!" in a loud tone, in which astonishment and pity for my blindness were mingled, "Why, there is the ship plain enough!" pointing to some of the black and yellow shapes, which were as unlike a ship as they were to anything else.

The picture was then removed and packed, together with the others. As that operation was proceeding, and I was almost praying for the poor fellow to go, he said suddenly:

"Do you happen to know Mr. ——?" naming an old friend and Academic colleague of mine.

"Very well indeed," said I.

"Do you think he would like to see my pictures?"

"Yes," said I, eagerly seizing the chance of getting rid of my crazy visitor, who now seemed very eager to go; "I am sure he would. There," said I, as with trembling fingers I wrote my colleague's address, "that is where he lives; but you must be quick, or you won't find him at home;" and the artist disappeared, to my infinite relief.

In a few hours I received a letter from Mr. ——, in which he upbraided me in strong language. Amongst the rest he said:

"What on earth do you mean by sending a maniac to me? I owe you one for this! The man frightened

me, and I got him to bring his mad things as near the fire as possible, that I might be within easy reach of the poker!"

The poor artist's works were sent to Burlington House, and I received a well-expressed note from him, telling me of their fate.

"I cannot understand the rejection of these works," he said; "and I am much hurt by it."

My principal contribution to the Exhibition of 1885 was the elaborate composition called "Knox at Holyrood," supplemented by a portrait of Mrs. Alfred Pope, the wife of the owner of my picture of "The Private View."

I am filled with astonishment, not unmixed with envy, when I hear from one of my most distinguished colleagues that his pictures — containing numbers of figures in mediæval costume—are painted without models, either for human beings or accessories.

I should scarcely be believed if I were to sum up the outlay for dresses, models, etc., necessary for me to incur, before such a work as "Knox" could be executed. As an example, I may mention that I found it requisite to have the large brass lamp with many branches, that hangs above the figures, made on purpose for my picture; elaborate brocades had to be acquired; to say nothing of jerkins, silk hose, and such like, made to fit the models. Fuseli used to say that "nature put him out;" and Maclise seldom, if ever, used models. Let the student take note by the example of these men of the fatal effects of "painting without nature."

CHAPTER XXIV.

JOHN LEECH.

My acquaintance with John Leech—which ripened afterwards into warm friendship—began more than forty years ago in the studio of Mrs. McIan. Old playgoers will remember Mr. McIan as an actor and painter; and old painters may have seen many pictures by his clever wife, who, on the morning of my call upon her, was giving Leech some of his first lessons in oil-painting. I was introduced to the handsome young fellow, whose name was familiar to me as the author of some drawings in a new comic paper called *Punch*, and I watched his efforts, which seemed promising enough, with interest. Mrs. McIan appeared to think that Leech would soon cease to ornament *Punch*, indeed she doubted, as did many others, that *Punch* would succeed long in attracting the public; and I joined her in the hope that her young friend would persevere in mastering the difficulty of the technicalities of oil-painting, and so place himself amongst the best painters of the country. She was in the wrong as to the prospects of *Punch*, and I think she was also wrong in think-

ing Leech would ever have succeeded in painting well. He lacked the disposition to continuous, steady, mechanical industry, necessary for success. I have often heard him ridicule the care spent on details in pictures. *Finish*, in his opinion, was so much waste of time. "When you can see what a man means to convey in his picture, in whatever way he does it, you have got all he wants, and all you ought to desire; all work after that is thrown away." These were his words, as well as I can remember them. He was, however, very desirous to be able to paint his ideas, as his efforts, fitful and uncertain, constantly proved. Many an hour did he spend in watching my own attempts to paint; and I remember on one occasion, as I was finishing a rather elaborate chandelier, he said:

"Ah, my Frith! I wasn't created to do that sort of work; I could never muster up patience for it."

After all, I think we may admit that Leech's want of success as a painter was, in a sense, a blessing in disguise. The carrying out of his subjects into pictures—from the time necessary for their proper production—would have deprived us, perhaps, of numbers of immortal sketches; and though undoubtedly he "left off where difficulties begin"—as I once heard a painter, who was exasperated at Leech's sneers at his manipulation, say to him—he has left work behind him which will continue to delight generation after generation, so long as wit, humour, character, and beauty are appreciated—that is to say, as long as human nature endures.

It is a melancholy task to me to try to recall the social scenes in which Leech so often figured; sad to think how few of his friends, more intimate with him than I, remain. Though Leech very rarely illustrated any ideas but his own, I can recall an instance or two to the contrary; and still oftener have I seen, by the sparkle of his eye, that something in the passing conversation had suggested a "cut." As examples: at Egg's one night we were talking of the difficulty that the pronunciation of certain words would present to one who had *dined* too freely. I said, after different long words had been proposed, that I thought antediluvian topics, in which such names as Ichthyosaurus and Plesiosaurus might occur, would puzzle a tipsy man a good deal. In the following week Leech gave us his idea of the appearance of a young gentleman who had rashly ventured on such difficult ground. I am not sure, but I think it was Dickens who said that a big cock pheasant, rising under one's nose, was like a fire-work let off in a similar locality. All the world has seen Mr. Briggs and the immortal firework. When cards, or some other way of getting rid of time after dinner, have been proposed, I have heard Leech say: "Oh, bother cards! let us have conversation." And talk it was—good talk enough often—but Leech was more a listener than a partaker; not that he could not talk, and admirably, but he was of the nervous, melancholy temperament, so common to men who possess wit and humour to a high degree. His songs were melancholy and very difficult to get

from him. Indeed, the only one I can remember—and that only partially — was something about "King-Death," with allusions to a beverage called "coal-black wine," which that potentate was supposed to drink. I can see the dear fellow's handsome, melancholy face, with his eyes cast up to the ceiling, where Dickens said the song was written in ghostly print, which only Leech could read.

To return for a moment to Leech's practice, he very seldom made sketches from nature. He told me that he could count upon the fingers of one hand all the drawings he had made from natural objects. In his work he trusted entirely to memory and imagination. There is an admirable cut in *Punch* of a young lady who has been bathing at Ramsgate with her aunt, whose attention she is directing to two stuffed, life-sized figures, representing soldiers, which used to stand on the sands as marks for archers. The aunt is short-sighted, and the girl is wickedly pretending that the figures are live officers watching the bathers. The aunt says they may be officers, but they cannot be gentlemen, etc. I well recollect Leech showing me a pencil drawing of the targets in human form, and telling me how seldom he adopted the practice. As I fancy I am one of the very few who have figured personally in *Punch* under Leech's pencil, I may be excused for the egotism of the following:

About the year 1852 I began the first of a series of pictures from modern life, then quite a novelty in

the hands of anyone who could paint tolerably. When the picture was finished, Leech came to see it, and expressed his pleasure at an artist leaving what he called "mouldy costumes," for the habits and manners of everyday life. Whilst he was talking, two of my brother artists came and saw the picture for the first time. They both looked long at the picture, and the longer they looked, judging from their faces, the less they liked it. I shall not forget Leech's expression when I gave him a sort of questioning look as to the correctness of his judgment.

"Well, what do you think of the picture?" said Leech to one of the artists.

"Well, really, I don't know what to think," was the reply.

Anybody caring to see the way the great artist made a picture out of this, will find it in one of the numbers of *Life and Character*, and will see me figure as Jack Armstrong, and my two artist friends as Messrs. Potter and Feeble. The background resembles my old painting-room, with armour, cabinets of oak, etc., for which memory alone served the artist. In common with many of my fellow-creatures, I proposed a great many subjects to Leech. I think he said, "Ah, capital!" to almost all of them; but in the whole course of our acquaintance he never drew but one, and that only after asking me—when I thought it had gone the way of the others—if I intended to use it myself. I had told him that my brother-in-law had taken a party to Epsom to the

Derby ; they went by road, and when the time came to summon the post-boy and return home, that individual was found so very drunk as to be quite incapable of sitting his horse for a moment. He was tied on to the carriage, and my brother-in-law mounted into his saddle and drove home. The scene will be familiar to those who study *Punch's* delightful volumes. How often Leech was told that he was the "backbone of *Punch*," and that if anything happened to him the days of the paper were numbered! I thought it, and said as much to him. I can see him smile, and hear him say, "Don't talk such rubbish. Why, bless your heart, there isn't a fellow at work on the paper that doesn't think *that* of himself, and with as much right and reason as I should; but I think no such nonsense."

As Leech got older his melancholy increased upon him; his extreme sensitiveness to noise became more acute, and when at last he became subject to slight attacks of *angina pectoris*, his descriptions of his sufferings from street noises of all kinds were painful to hear. My last talk with Leech was on a certain Tuesday, at a dinner-party given by an old friend of mine and Leech's, Mr. Hills, in Queen Anne Street. I sat next him at dinner, and was somewhat struck by his worn and melancholy appearance, which, I thought, had increased upon him. His constant talk during dinner was of the annoyances he was subjected to by organs, bands, barking of dogs, cock-crowing, etc. "Rather," he said, "than endure

the torment that I suffer all day long, I would prefer to go to the grave where there is no noise." These were the last words I heard from John Leech. He died on the following Saturday from a severe attack of *angina pectoris*, and in the following week he was in the grave where "there is no noise."

CHAPTER XXV.

A GHOST STORY.

"WHAT a piece of work is man," says Shakespeare; "in apprehension how like a god!" Amongst all the examples of man's power, surely the employment of the sun as an artist is one of the most wonderful. That this discovery is not of unmixed good is shown, I think, in the imminent destruction by photography of a beautiful art, that of the miniature-painter. In my earlier days the miniature-room at the Royal Academy was one of the chief attractions of the Annual Exhibition. The works of Sir William Ross, Thorburn, Wells, and others, were exquisite examples of a delightful art, but they were powerless in competition with their rival, the sun. That distinguished artist in an instant fixes a likeness, which, by a rapid process, is prepared for the "artistic merit" with which the colourist "invests" the cheap photograph. The exhibitions of to-day still afford us examples—good ones sometimes—of struggles against the sun, and against the bad taste and ignorance of the public; but each succeeding year serves to show the diminished numbers of this

"forlorn hope," and unless a fickle public tires of photography, as it does of everything else, miniature-painting will soon be numbered amongst the lost arts.

An artist, whom I shall call Westwood, whose miniatures are amongst the best of those in each year's show, is the hero of the following story; the relation of which I heard from his own lips.

Mr. Westwood is a peripatetic artist, and his wanderings have been extensive and varied; not without their charms, for he has generally found himself treated with genial hospitality, and his art with respect. In one of his professional tours a few years ago, he found himself at a country-house filled with autumn company. The house was a "moated grange," dating from the days of the Tudors, with alterations and additions of a later time, and the owner's name was Blob. A room, with the necessary north light, was set apart for the artist, whose time was to be devoted to the portraiture of the Misses and Master Blob. Westwood, like many of his tribe, was a bad sleeper, being terribly susceptible to the noises of the night, the slightest of which would always wake him from his fitful slumber; cock-crowing being held in especial horror. His satisfaction was therefore great, when he found that he was consigned to the only vacant bedroom in the Maison Blob, from the oriel window of which tranquillity, in the shape of a huge garden, was assured to him—beyond the twittering of birds no noise could reach him.

As I have said, the house was full of company,

and "a jovial crew they were," said the artist; so, with music, games, and a quadrille or two, the evening passed merrily away, and Westwood went to rest. The bed was a huge four-poster with hearse-like plumes crowning each post; opposite to it was a large oak cabinet, and to the left, and facing the door, was the oriel window. The moon shone full upon the window, making the room almost as bright as day. The excitement of the evening was not the best preparative for a bad sleeper, and for some time the painter sat by the window, and enjoyed the moonlight effects in the garden. But the effort to sleep must be made, and Westwood mounted into his big bed, and laid himself down to woo the terribly fickle god; he closed his eyes, and counted the proverbial flock of sheep. He also counted up to a hundred, and had managed to count part of that number backwards, when, feeling that the common receipt for sleep was unavailing, he opened his eyes. At the bottom of the bed, in full moonlight, stood the figure of a lady. She was somewhat elderly, and appeared to be looking for something she had lost. Westwood sat up in bed, and said:

"I beg your pardon; I think you have mistaken your room."

As he spoke he looked attentively at the figure, in the endeavour to identify it with one of the Blob guests, but in vain. The lady looked as if she had stepped from the canvas of Reynolds, and, to his astonishment, the oak cabinet was plainly visible through her!

"By Jove," said Westwood to himself, "here is a ghost at last! Now I call this interesting."

As these thoughts—in which he assured me fear had not the least share—passed through his mind, the figure raised its face and looked straight at the painter. It was an awful face, with an expression of horror and distress unutterable. For an instant the head was bent, and the apparent search renewed; then, as if in despairing hopelessness, the figure, wringing its hands, slowly faded away.

"What a pity she went away so soon! a little longer I could have got her face sufficiently for a sketch. Nobody would believe this. I wish she would come back!"

She did not, and after watching for an hour or two, the artist slept.

After next morning's breakfast, Westwood took Mrs. Blob aside, and told her what he had seen.

"Oh, Mr. Westwood! I am so sorry! I ought to have told you. You are not the least frightened? Oh, I am so glad! but we ought to have told you. That disagreeable room was the only vacant one, you know. Is the tiresome creature likely to come to see you again? I fear so—yes."

"I most devoutly hope so," said my friend. "Now, Mrs. Blob, I shall ask you for a lamp. I can keep it turned down very low. My water-colours shall be ready. Fire? Oh, I will be most careful. I do so want to make a sketch, and after a night or two I could manage it."

"There is a picture of the woman by Reynolds in the gallery. Can't you do it from that?"

"Please show it to me."

Into the gallery went Westwood's hostess, followed by the artist.

"Ah, I can see the likeness; but this is a young and lovely woman. Yes, she might grow into the shape and make of my ghostly visitor; but the ghost must be seventy at least."

"Yes," said Mrs. Blob, "the wretch was rather more than that when the crime was committed, which she seems to be expiating in this unpleasant manner."

"Oh, a crime!" said Westwood. "What crime?"

"Really," replied the lady, "I can't bear to talk of her wickedness. Mr. Blob will tell you all about it if you desire to know more."

Westwood made a good beginning of the Blob miniature. Night came, the convivial dinner was repeated, and the artist retired, armed with palette and brushes, and waited the return of the spirit. Nor did he wait in vain. The previous night's performance was repeated, but before it began, the painter addressed the ghost in these words:

"'Madam, my dear madam, nobody will believe this unless I can give substantial evidence of the truth of it. Would you mind staying a little longer than usual, so that I could get your image more perfectly into my mind? I am an artist, madam, in water-colours——' Confound her, she is gone again! Never mind, I've had a dooced good look at her."

And with these words the light was turned up, and,

though the sitting was all too short (as sittings so often are), a satisfactory beginning was made.

My friend was warned by his hostess to say nothing of what he had seen, to the children especially, or to anyone else.

"We never use the room," said the lady, "if we can avoid doing so; and when the necessity arises we warn our guests, for the wretch is sure to visit the place. I suppose we shall end in building up the room."

(This, I hear, has since been done.) Westwood's work at the "moated grange" was over in about a fortnight, and by that time, after regular midnight visits from the spirit, he made what he assured me is not a bad likeness of his nocturnal visitor; and a most awful face it is, with a terrible crime-haunted expression impossible to forget.

Of all my acquaintances I know none more prosaic and sensible than my old friend Westwood, who persists to this day that the drawing—photographs from which are in several hands—was a *bonâ-fide* portrait of a ghost. Before he took his departure he heard the particulars of the crime, and, though we ought not to say so, the Blobs should be grateful to the perpetrator; for the consequences of it were a vast accession of property to them.

About the year 1780 the owner of the "moated grange" and the property attached to it, died, leaving an infant son, heir to the property, whose mother died in giving him birth. The child was but a few weeks old when it was left to the care of an old lady,

whose family were interested in its death, because, if that event occurred, the estates would revert to them. The heir died suddenly from a fit of convulsions, as announced in the country paper; the truth being that the old lady sent the nurse out of the room—which she afterwards haunted—on an errand that required some little time for the fulfilment of its duties; and in her absence, the murderess smothered the child with a pillow as it lay in its cot on the floor. This is the tale as it was told to me, and I think it would be difficult to find a better authenticated ghost-story.

I supplement Westwood's story by an unpleasant experience of another friend of mine.

At Knebworth, the seat of Lord Lytton, there is a bedchamber called the "Yellow Boy's Room." The story goes that Lord Castlereagh—Byron's "carotid-cutting Castlereagh"—was, on one occasion, the guest of the late Lord Lytton's father. Without any warning he was consigned, for the night, to the "Yellow Boy's Room." On the following morning Lord Castlereagh told Mr. Bulwer that he had been disturbed in the night in a very startling and unpleasant fashion.

"I was very tired," said my lord, "and was soon asleep. I could not have slept long, for the wood-fire opposite the foot of my bed was still burning when I started up. What awoke me I know not. I looked in the direction of the fire and saw, sitting with its back towards me, what appeared to be the figure of a boy with long yellowish hair. As I looked, the figure arose, turned towards me, and

drawing back the curtain at the bottom of the bed with one hand, with the other he drew his fingers two or three times across his throat. I saw him," said my lord, "as distinctly as I see you now."

"You must have been dreaming," said Bulwer.

"No, I was wide awake."

Mr. Bulwer did *not* tell Lord Castlereagh that the "Yellow Boy" always appeared to anyone who was destined to die a violent death, and always indicated the manner of it to the victim.

These details were communicated by the late Lord Lytton to an extremely nervous—not to say timid—artist friend of mine at midnight of the first day of his visit to Knebworth.

"You are not nervous, I know, my dear Mr. Green, or I would have kept this from you, as you will sleep in the "Yellow Boy's Room" to-night. You will not be frightened, will you?"

"N—no—o," said my friend, with an ashy face.

"Well, it is getting late; what do you say to retiring? Yes, that is your candle. Too warm for a fire in your room. You don't mind? Good-night."

The rest of the story shall be told in my old friend's words, as nearly as I can remember them.

"I had seen the infernal room before dinner, and I thought it looked a ghostly sort of place; and when I reached it that night, what would I not have given to be back in my own room at home! I looked under the bed, up the great wide chimney, and had a shock from the sight of my own face in the

looking-glass. No ghost could be whiter than I was. I don't believe in ghosts, you know; but still it was really too bad of Lytton to tell me such things just as I was going to bed, and then to put me in the very place! There was an awful old cabinet. I managed to pull one door open, and was tugging at the other, when my candle went out—how, I don't know—somebody seemed to blow it out. I can't tell you what became of it; all I know is I jumped into bed with my boots on, and lay trembling there for hours, Frith—literally for hours—till sleep took me at last: and never was I more thankful than when I awoke and saw the sun shining into the 'Yellow Boy's Room.'"

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE STORY OF MY PORTRAIT.

THE student need never be at loss for a model, so long as he possesses a looking-glass. Better practice than the reproduction of his own features cannot be followed. He is sure of a patient sitter, and he has the example of nearly all the great painters, whose "very form and feature" have come down to us limned by their own hands.

There are between thirty and forty portraits of Rembrandt painted by himself. Some of Reynolds's finest works are reproductions of himself in his habit as he lived; and the forms of Titian, Vandyke, Rubens, Raphael, and Leonardo, to say nothing of nearly—if not quite—all the great Dutchmen, are as familiar to us as household words. I share—in common with all my fellow-creatures—the eager curiosity that everyone feels respecting the outward and visible form of the producer of works of genius, be they artistic or literary. Portrait-painting, speaking generally, is to me the most difficult part of the art, and my own likeness has defied me over and over again.

In my youth, and in the absence of a better model, I spent hour after hour staring into a mirror, with results unrecognisable by my friends as likenesses of myself. One of the best of these portraits is in the possession of my old friend Mr. J. C. Parkinson, so well known as the genial and accomplished friend of Dickens (to whose *Household Words* he so often contributed). I believe Mr. Parkinson found me in a shop-window, and possessed me without a great pecuniary sacrifice. Mr. Parkinson is doubtless well known to my readers as the author of several works displaying considerable literary ability, showing a more powerful grasp than that necessary—or possible even—for the fugitive pieces in the periodical press. My old friend numbers amongst his acquaintances nearly every man of mark in London, and I believe there is not one amongst them who would not be pleased to consider himself his friend.

Another early work, an engraving of which prefaces the first volume of my autobiography, was brought to my notice by a friend who discovered it in an establishment in Great Portland Street.

"It is a capital picture," he said, "and though not a bit like what you are now, I fancy it may have resembled you scores of years ago. Go and look at it."

I yielded to the advice, and made my way to Great Portland Street, where, in a shabby gallery behind a shop, I saw my own image, after an estrangement of five-and-forty years. I have not

the least recollection of parting with the portrait, either by way of sale or gift, nor could I trace its wanderings from any information that the shopkeeper could afford me; but I determined to buy it if the price were reasonable. I found the presiding genius of the place was a woman. After examining several works of a very uninteresting character, I affected to catch a sight of my own portrait, and said:

"Ah, a portrait! Whose likeness is that?"

"That," said the lady, "is a portrait of the celebrated artist, Frith, painted by himself."

"Frith?" said I; "why, he must be quite an elderly man."

"Well, sir, but he was young once; and that's what he was when he was young."

"Hum—ha!" said I, pretending to examine the picture. "Not much of a picture."

"I beg your pardon; judges think it a very fine picture."

"Well, what is the price?"

"Twenty pounds."

"Surely that is a stiff price?" said I.

"Well," said the woman, "it cost us nearly as much; we shall make a very small profit. You see, it is very valuable, because the artist is *diseased*."

"Deceased!" I exclaimed. "Dead, do you mean?"

"Yes, sir. Died of drink."

"Surely," I exclaimed, "you have made a mistake!"

"About the drink? Oh no, sir; most artists is very dissipated. He was dreadful, Frith was. I dare say you have seen the print called 'The Railway Station.' Well, my husband used to see him when he was doing of it, always more or less in liquor. My husband wondered how he could do his work; but it wore him out at last—the drink did."

"Why," said I, "how can that be, when I tell you a friend of mine saw him the other day?"

"Not Frith, your friend didn't. How could he? when he's dead and buried, as I well know, for my husband attended his funeral!"

"Can't you modify the price of the portrait a little?" said I. "Twenty pounds is too much."

"No, sir—that is what my husband fixed the price at; I was never to take no less. My husband and him was great friends, and he would rather keep the likeness than sell it for less."

Finding the woman immovable, I paid the money, and the portrait is now in my possession. I did not reveal myself to the shopkeeper, for she would not have believed me if I had assured her of what she may learn, if by a very unlikely chance she reads these pages—that I am not *diseased*, and that I never was drunk but once in my life, and the consequences of that lapse were so very unpleasant that I have no fear of ever repeating the indiscretion.

I may have a difficulty in persuading my readers that a young artist may spend hours, even days, over a picture, and then forget all about it to such a degree as to make the sight of it, after a long lapse

of time, perfectly new to him; that is to say, he will not recognise it as anything he has previously seen. Such, however, is the fact; and it is no less true that artists have been known to repudiate pictures afterwards conclusively proved to be authentic, with consequences unpleasant to themselves.

I will give an example. A picture, with the name of Poole, R.A., attached to it, was sold at Christie's. The purchaser, though perfectly satisfied of its originality, sent the picture to the artist, with a request that he would sign it. Poole looked at the picture, and then at the messenger, and said:

"Tell the person who sent this thing for me to sign that it is not my work. I never saw it before, and I hope I shall never see it again."

"Indeed!" said the owner, when the message was conveyed to him, "then I will have my money restored to me."

Messrs. Christie put the buyer in communication with the seller, with the following result:

"Oh! Poole denies he did it, does he? Look here, I have his own receipt for the purchase-money, received from his own hands in the year ——. I will go to the artist with you."

And to the artist both buyer and seller went.

"As I told your messenger," said Poole, "I never saw the picture before in my life. You, sir? No, I have no recollection of ever having seen you."

"Do you think you would know your own handwriting, sir?" said the seller.

"Suppose I should," said Poole.

"Then do me the favour to cast your eye over that," showing receipt.

Poole read—a pause.

"Yes, that is my receipt, sure enough."

Then a long and steady look at the picture by the artist.

"I can't for the life of me recollect it," said he; "but I do remember painting a small picture of 'Lear and Cordelia' in the year ——. I painted it on a piece of panel made from the wood of an old worn-out piano, and if that is the one, you will find a small knot in the wood at the back."

The picture was turned round, and, lo! the knot! Profuse apology from the painter, and his signature was placed on the picture.

In the days of Reynolds the forgetfulness of artists of their early works was broached at the dinner-table in Leicester Fields. Reynolds could not bring himself to believe in the possibility of a man's so completely forgetting the production of his own brain and hand. Some months after the discussion a very early work of Reynolds's came into the possession of Burke. That distinguished man, accompanied by a friend—Bennet Langton, I think—called upon Reynolds, and showed him the picture as the work of a young student whose friends were anxious to know if the great painter would advise, from the specimen shown, that the young man should be allowed to adopt art as his profession. Reynolds looked long at the picture, and turning to Burke, said:

"Is the painter of this a friend of yours?"

"Yes," was the reply. "I know and am much interested in him."

"Well," said Sir Joshua, again studying the portrait attentively, "I really don't feel able to give an opinion one way or the other. *It is a cleverish thing*, but whether there is sufficient promise in it to justify my advising the young man to adopt art as his profession I really cannot say."

The picture was proved to be Reynolds's work, but the artist had completely forgotten it. In my own career I have experienced the truth of this strange fact. A gentleman, whose father's portrait I had painted when I was very young, was desirous that I should see it, and said as much to a friend of mine. I went to his house, and was shown into the dining-room, in which there were several portraits, and mine amongst them; but I was quite unable to say which of the series—they were all pretty bad—was painted by me.

CHAPTER XXVII.

JENNY LIND, MR. BARNUM, AND OTHERS.

PROMINENT characters live in an atmosphere of rumour. The celebrated American Mr. Barnum, *entrepreneur*, showman, and "universal provider" of all kinds of amusement, holds a distinguished place in the public mind, favourable or unfavourable. According to the dictates of rumour, I think the idea of most people would be, that if Mr. Barnum had entered into an engagement highly beneficial to himself, he would not permit it to be broken for the benefit of somebody else. That is what rumour would say; and what I am about to relate will prove that rumour lies, as usual. I may premise that I have not the honour of Mr. Barnum's acquaintance; my sole object in making known an incident connected with him, being to prove how mistaken those may be who can only see in the dealer in amusements, the hard and exacting task-master.

All the world has heard of Jenny Lind, but all the world may not know that she was only on the stage two years, and that part of that time was spent

in America, whither the Swedish songstress went, bound by a legal engagement to sing under Mr. Barnum's management and direction only. Whether from being badly advised, or from the undervaluing of powers common to modest genius, Mademoiselle Lind found, on her arrival in America, that she had made a terrible mistake in the terms of her engagement. She was fast bound, and she knew it; and in default of a release from the awful Barnum, she was prepared to fulfil her duties to the letter. Immediately after the lady's arrival Mr. Barnum appeared. He listened to reasons and explanations, all demonstrating, from the singer's point of view, the mistake that had been made; and he was assured that if those reasons had no weight with him, he might rely on every point of the engagement being religiously carried out.

"This, madam, is the document you signed in England, is it not?" said Mr. Barnum, producing a deed.

"Undoubtedly," said the lady, "and I am ready to abide by it, if I have been unable to convince——"

"Be so good as to destroy it. Tear it up, madam; and if you will instruct your lawyer to prepare another from your own dictation, naming whatever you think fair for your services, I will sign it without hesitation."

This was done; the terms were satisfactorily increased, and the engagement was fulfilled so successfully as to leave Mr. Barnum a substantial reward for his generosity.

I had the honour and pleasure of meeting Madame Otto Goldschmidt at dinner, at my friend Mr. Lumley Smith's house, when I heard the foregoing from her own lips, and at the same time received permission to make it as public as I pleased.

In writing of one great singer, I am reminded of the many delightful evenings on which I have met others at the hospitable house of Mr. J. M. Levy in Lancaster Gate, and in Grosvenor Street. Nilsson, Patti, and Titiens were constant guests; and if my memory does not betray me, I heard all three sing on the same evening, in the drawing-room at Lancaster Gate. It would be difficult to imagine more charming gatherings than those collected by Mr. Levy, more sumptuous dinners, better wines, or—most valued of all, by some—rarer cigars, than those offered to his guests. My first sight of Rubinstein was there. In short, if I were to go on naming the distinguished people collected together, I should have to mention most of the "lions" of each London season.

On one memorable occasion we were honoured by the company of the "Midgets," who were served with a miniature dinner, all to themselves. When they were at their dessert I leant over the female Midget, who was very like a monkey, and as spiteful as one, and asked her for a grape from her little plate. She placed her left hand over the plate, and with her fork in the right she made a dash at my face, which might have deprived me of the sight of an eye, for she only just missed one of them.

After dinner Nilsson took them in her arms, and sitting on the floor, sang to them. The wondering, rather frightened, expression of the creatures' faces was striking, as indeed was Nilsson herself, looking like a splendid embodiment of Charity with her attendant children.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

LADY ARTISTS.

I FEAR it must be admitted, if we study the history of art from its earliest development, that few female names adorn it; we have a long and honoured list of old masters, but no old mistresses. In the first list of names of Royal Academicians we find two of the gentler sex—Angelica Kauffman and Mary Moser; the first was a painter of historical and Scripture pieces, the second a fruit and flower painter. Neither of these attained a high level in their respective ranks; Mrs. Moser being far surpassed by the Misses Mutrie of our day. I cannot recall the precise date of the admission of lady students to the Royal Academy; but a very few years ago they were inadmissible; now they are almost equal in number to the male students, from whom they constantly carry off prizes. Whether the means and methods of study, shared equally (except in one important particular) with their rougher rivals, will in course of time qualify them to become old mistresses to future ages, time only can prove. My position as visitor, or teacher, in the higher schools has brought me into contact with numbers of lady

students, whose admirable studies from the life have often surprised and delighted me ; and in the Antique School I have seen drawings by mere girls that could not be surpassed. Here, then, we have students armed with the means of producing good, and even great, pictures; and I think I may safely assert that if the great pictures are yet to come, our Annual Exhibitions show good ones by several female artists. The sensation created by the exhibition of Miss Thompson's picture of "The Roll Call" must be well within the memory of my readers. I fear we cannot claim this lady as a student of the Academy, but we have several others of whom we may justly boast. Amongst the first, as practising in the higher walk of art, is Mrs. Ernest Normand, who, under her maiden name, Miss Rae, has exhibited during the last three years works of a poetic character that would do credit to any school.

The names of the sisters Montalba, as painters and sculptors, are pleasantly familiar to all visitors to Burlington House, their works showing not only able performance, but great promise for the future. Many men would be proud to see their names attached to the pictures of Mrs. F. Morgan, who under her maiden name, Alice Havers, has again and again exhibited works full of nature, beauty, and truth. As I write these words I am reminded of one whom I honour more than any living female painter, always excepting Rosa Bonheur, of whom I shall speak presently. For the most delightful treatment of homely and sometimes unpromising

subjects, for the most subtle and intense appreciation of beauty, whether of colour or of form, in all its aspects, the water-colour drawings of Mrs. Allingham may be sought for in the Pall Mall Gallery with a certainty of delight to the student, as well as to the ordinary visitor. Whether the subject chosen by this admirable artist be a nursery group occupied in nursery trifling, or a woman hanging out clothes in a cottage garden, with its flowers and homely surroundings, these commonplace themes are invested with such exquisite art as to make them "a joy for ever." I can scarcely boast of even a slight acquaintance with Mrs. Allingham—or, indeed, with any of the ladies I have mentioned—but I do confess to sensations of envy when I recognise the intense feeling for nature and the happiness that must accrue from such perfect rendering of its beauties, as this lady possesses.

There is yet another member of the Old Water-Colour Society whose drawings of fruit and flowers *were*—for, unhappily, she is no longer living—of the highest excellence, and for many years worthily considered great attractions of the yearly Exhibitions in Pall Mall. Excepting by William Hunt, Mrs. Angel's drawings of dead birds, flowers, and fruit, were never surpassed.

I feel I am not out of place, as a member of the Royal Academy, in giving expression to my satisfaction—which I know to be shared by many of my colleagues—with the works of so many of the ladies who "take their chance" with us every year; and amongst the most prominent are my old friends

Miss Starr, now Madame Canziani, and Miss Kate Dickens, now Mrs. Perugini. Miss Starr is a gold medallist, and her Exhibition-work year after year sufficiently proves that she has taken full advantage of her Academic education. It is a sad reflection that the premature death of Charles Dickens—occurring as it did before his daughter became known as an artist—should have deprived him of the happiness of witnessing Mrs. Perugini's successes. The interest Dickens always took in art and artists would have been intensified—how greatly!—when he found one so near and dear to him amongst its valued professors.

Artists' wives and sisters are frequent exhibitors, and some of them excellent painters. For many years—indeed, till the lamented death of her husband—my old friend Mrs. E. M. Ward held a well-won position on the Academy walls. Her pictures always displayed a thorough knowledge of the principles of art, and these she now imparts to a large school-full of ladies, whose progress I, in company with some of my colleagues, have the satisfaction of superintending from time to time. The exhibited works of Mrs. Alma Tadema afford proofs of original power developed under the eye of her distinguished husband.

Miss Dicksee, Miss Gow, and Mrs. Seymour-Lucas (one of whose pictures in the last Exhibition received the compliment of being selected by Sir Frederick Leighton for the Art Gallery at Melbourne) are nearly connected with the admirable

artists whose names they bear, and how worthily those names are borne may be seen every year at Burlington House. More fortunate are my friends in their sisters than Sir Joshua Reynolds was in his, for it is related that Miss Reynolds's pictures were of such a character that "they made her brother cry and everybody else laugh."

With every desire to do justice to our lady exhibitors, I may forget some of whom I ought to make honourable mention. I think we owe them a debt of gratitude; and to those already mentioned I must add the names of Mrs. Lea Merritt, Miss Osborne, Mrs. Jopling, Miss Dealy, and no doubt I ought to enumerate many others. Whether we shall have female Academicians or not depends upon the ladies themselves; all the honours the Academy can bestow are open to them, from the lowly seat of the Associate to the Presidential chair. A female President is not impossible. After the death of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mrs. Moser might have reigned in that great man's stead if she had received sufficient support, for all members were candidates. The fates were against her, for she only obtained one vote—that of Fuseli—against Benjamin West, who had all the rest. Fuseli met the remonstrance of a brother Academician by declaring that "he did not see why he shouldn't vote for one old woman as well as another." I most sincerely hope that we have amongst us young mistresses in the art of painting that future ages may see fit to rank amongst the old masters; and though I decline to prophesy with

respect to England, I feel sure I am a true prophet when I say that France possesses a lady artist whose name will never die. That name is Rosa Bonheur.

In 1868 the Great Exhibition was held in Paris, in which the English school of painting was worthily represented, and as worthily acknowledged, by the French. I went to Paris accompanied by Millais, as I have noted elsewhere. Our friend Gambart was the first to introduce the works of Rosa Bonheur to the English collectors. The famous "Horse Fair" passed through his hands, together with very many others, some of which still remain with him in his marble palace at Nice. Above and beyond all the eminent French artists to whom Gambart introduced us, we were most anxious to make the acquaintance of Mademoiselle Rosa Bonheur. Our desire was no sooner made known to that lady than it was gratified, for we received an invitation to luncheon with her at her château in the Forest of Fontainebleau. See us, then, arrive at the station, where a carriage waits, the coachman appearing to be a French abbé. The driver wore a black, broad-brimmed hat and black cloak, long white hair, with a cheery rosy face.

"But that red ribbon?" said I to Gambart. "Do priests wear the Legion of Honour?"

"Priest!" replied Gambart; "what priest? That is Mademoiselle Bonheur. She is one of the very few ladies in France who is *décorée*. You can speak French; get on to the box beside her."

Then chatting delightfully, we were driven to the

château, in ancient times one of the forest-keeper's lodges, castellated and picturesque to the last degree; date about Louis XIII. There lives the great painter with a lady companion; and others in the form of boars, lions, and deer, who serve as models. The artist had little or nothing to show us of her own work. Her health had not been good of late; besides, when her "work is done it is always carried off," she said. Stretching along one side of a very large studio was a composition in outline of corn-threshing—in Spain, I think—the operation being performed by horses, which are made to gallop over the sheaves—a magnificent work, begging to be completed.

"Ah," said the lady, looking wistfully at the huge canvas, "I don't know if I shall ever finish that!"

Of course Millais was deservedly overwhelmed with compliments, and I came in for my little share. That the luncheon was delightful goes without saying. One incident touched me. We spoke much of Landseer, whose acquaintance Rosa Bonheur had made on a visit to England, and with whose work she had, of course, great sympathy. Gambart repeated to her some words of praise given by Landseer to a picture of hers then exhibiting in London. Her eyes filled with tears as she listened. I can speak of no more female painters after paying an imperfect tribute to the greatest of all, so with that immortal name I conclude this chapter upon lady artists.

CHAPTER XXIX.

PEOPLE I HAVE KNOWN.

If it be true that a man can put no more into his work than there is in himself, it is also undeniable that his work—if it be a picture—will betray the real character of its author; who, in the unconscious development of his peculiarities, constantly presents to the initiated, signs by which an infallible judgment may be pronounced on the painter's mind and character.

If an artist have a vulgar mind, his work will be vulgar; if he be of a shifty and untruthful nature, his picture will faithfully reflect these faults. We know Vandyke must have been a refined and courtly gentleman, as surely as we are convinced that Jan Stein was the jovial, often drunken, companion of the guests at kermess or ale-house.

Though I speak under correction as regards authors and books, I have often proved, to my own satisfaction, that it is as difficult for a writer to hide his real character when he employs the pen, as it is for the artist to be false to himself when he uses the brush. It would, however, require an intimate ac-

quaintance with some celebrated persons—writers and others—to discover qualities in them which their published performances imperfectly display.

Amongst "men I have known," the late Shirley Brooks was a notable example of a man whose conversation and private correspondence were so sparkling and delightful, as to throw his novels, admirable as they are, completely into the shade.

As an example, I introduce in this place a letter written by Brooks in the name of Miss Baynes, the landlady of the Granby Hotel at Harrogate. It is needless to say that the paragraph alluded to was fictitious. The "early pictures" were some of my first efforts, presented to Miss Baynes many years ago, and they now hang on the walls of the Granby.

"DEAR MR. FRITH,

"Not being well able to write, I use the pen of our mutual friend, Mr. S. Brooks, who has kindly consented to convey to you a request which I have hardly the courage to make. But your kindness in the matter of your early pictures emboldens me to address you.

"The local authorities have decided that all the hotels in Harrogate shall have *signs*, and against this arbitrary rule we have petitioned in vain. The enclosed paragraph shows you our lamentable case.

"Would you be so kind as to paint me a sign for the Granby? I should take it very well of you. I have heard from a friend of yours that you can do *this*

sort of thing very well, and if you have any difficulty I am sure that your friend Mr. E. M. Ward, R.A., would assist you with advice and example. I leave the subject to yourself, but I need hardly say that it must not be at all objectionable in a *moral* point of view, as the visitors to the Granby are very high-toned about virtue and grub. If you did not mind (and I am aware that I may offend your modesty, which is one of your most pleasing characteristics) painting your own head for the sign, I should be very glad, and *it would be a good advertisement for you;* but if you prefer painting any other Guy, I shall be equally thankful. Terms shall not separate us, and if you would like to come and reside here for a fortnight, as soon as the *respectable* people are gone, you shall be treated as one of the family. Then you could hang the picture yourself, and as you have lately been on the Hanging Committee I shall feel much confidence in you.

"My nieces send their duty. They wish the sign to be the 'Queen Charlotte,' in honour of the elder; but you may not like this, for though her features are very charming, they are not what you would call Academical. But, if you come down, you can settle this with her.

"I must not trespass longer on your patience, or on that of Mr. Brooks, who is restless to get away and smoke. He is a delightful man, and I am glad that you *now* choose such excellent companions. It was not always so; but we need not revert to the follies of youth—we have all been young.

"I should like this colour to be predominant in the picture I ask for; and I am, dear Mr. Frith,

"Yours faithfully and sincerely,

"MISS BAYNES."

The colour that was to be "predominant in the picture" was indicated by a piece of bright red paper attached to the letter.

I shrink from speaking of living persons; but, having nothing disagreeable to say of any of them, I hope I shall be forgiven for introducing their names.

Of my old friend George Augustus Sala I am only echoing general opinion when I say he is one of the most brilliant and accomplished of living writers and talkers — witness his after-dinner speeches, scarcely surpassed by Dickens, the greatest speaker of all.

The novels of Edmund Yates are—or have been—in the hands of most people; but few, speaking comparatively, can have experienced the ready wit, the quick retort, and the rest of his admirable dinner-table talk, which it has fallen to my happy lot to share on innumerable occasions.

When I speak of Wilkie Collins, whom I have known all his life, I shall meet with no contradiction when I say he is one of the most popular novelists of the present day. There again you have a man who is as delightful in private as he is in public. That he is an admirable *raconteur* goes without saying; of an imperturbably good temper, as he proved on one

occasion at my own table, when a rude guest—of whom I was heartily ashamed—after declaring that popularity was no proof of merit, said to Collins by way of example:

"Why, your novels are read in every back-kitchen in England."

This Collins heard without a sign of irritation.

On the same occasion, that dreadful person told Shirley Brooks (then editor of *Punch*) that, of all the papers published in London, he considered *Punch* the dullest.

"I wonder you ever read it," said Brooks.

"I never do," was the reply.

"I was sure of that," said Brooks, "by your foolish observation."

I need scarcely say that this was the first and last time that my disagreeable guest appeared at my table. But I had a further experience of his unpleasantness. He wrote to me saying he had purchased a collection of drawings by the old masters; and though—knowing his dense ignorance of art—I made many excuses for not keeping appointments to see them, he persisted in dragging me to his hotel. When I refused to believe that a bad Dutch drawing of a "merry-making" was the work of Raphael, and that another wretched thing was done by Michael Angelo, he told me that painting bad modern pictures had completely blinded me, and that he should show me no more of his treasures. I was thankful to see the last of him and his drawings; and I afterwards heard that he was expelled from his

club, where he had succeeded in insulting every member of it.

From this disagreeable "man I have known" I turn to Anthony Trollope, none of whose works I had read till a few years ago, though I had known their author for a long time.

I must confess that my theory of men and their resemblance to their works must fall to the ground in Trollope's case, for it would be impossible to imagine anything less like his novels than the author of them. The books, full of gentleness, grace, and refinement; the writer of them, bluff, loud, stormy, and contentious; neither a brilliant talker nor a good speaker; but a kinder-hearted man and a truer friend never lived. What chance his works have of immortality I know no more than the prophets who are for ever telling us that A.'s works will be read a hundred years hence, and B.'s will not. Dr. Johnson said: "Sterne, sir? why, the man is already forgotten!" This the sage enounced when "Tristram Shandy" had been published, proving himself as good—or bad—a prophet as the rest of them.

I now come to another living author, whose name I suppress, merely adding that it is one that would be known to all my readers. My acquaintance with this gentleman was brief, as I shall proceed to show.

Those who have had the honour of dining at the Mansion House will remember that the Lord Mayor, attended by certain imposing City personages, stands in an outer gallery to receive his guests, and that an

avenue of them soon collects to watch new-comers. I was one amongst those who formed one side of the avenue, when a gentleman was brought to me and introduced. The figure was strange to me, but the name very familiar.

"Mr. Frith," said the gentleman, "I am delighted to make your acquaintance. I have long admired your works. Indeed, I possess several of them, and they are a great delight to me" (engravings, I thought); "and now that I have the pleasure of knowing you—as we are neighbours—I hope we shall improve our acquaintance."

I made the inevitable reply, and then said:

"I had no idea we were neighbours. In what part of Bayswater do you live?"

"Bayswater!" exclaimed my new acquaintance. —"Bayswater! I don't live in Bayswater. I live at Reigate. So do you."

"No," said I, "I don't. I never was at Reigate but once in my life."

"Why—how—what—are you not Mr. Frith, the photographer?"

"No," said I; "I have not that honour."

"Who are you, then?" said the author, rather abruptly.

"I am only an artist—a painter," said I.

"Indeed! Ah, I am disap—— I mean, I have so much desired to meet your namesake. Do you happen to know who that is who has just shaken hands with the Lord Mayor?"

It was quite evident that the author did not know

my name as an artist, which I flatter myself is curious. But this experience is thrown into shade by that of a highly-distinguished fellow-artist, as the following story sufficiently proves.

In my student-days at the Royal Academy, there was a young and rather clever fellow who rejoiced in the name of Potherd. He was a lanky lad, and he wore a long blue cloak with a cat-skin collar. Millais was contemporary with Potherd, but still a little boy when Potherd launched himself into the world as a full-fledged painter. No one ever heard of Potherd as an artist, but everybody, or nearly everybody, had already heard of Millais, who had painted some of his most famous works. One day when Millais, then grown into manhood, was walking somewhere in Camden Town, he saw a figure in a long blue cloak with a cat-skin collar, trudging slowly along before him.

"Surely," said Millais to himself, "I know that cloak and the cat-skin collar. Can the man be Potherd?"

Millais quickened his pace and overtook the blue cloak.

"Why, Potherd," said he, "it *is* you! How are you?"

"I am pretty well," said Potherd. "And who may you be?"

"I am Millais," said the painter. "Don't you remember me at the Academy?"

"Not little Johnny Millais, surely?" exclaimed Potherd. "Why, how you have grown!"

"Well, Potherd, I am very glad to see you again. How are you getting on?"

"Oh, middling. I don't find it a very good business. I teach a little, and do a portrait now and then when I can get anybody to sit. And you? Judging from your appearance, I should say you had given the arts the go-by. *What do you do for a living?*"

The truth of this may be relied upon, as I have heard it more than once from Millais himself.

My pen has run away with me, as usual. I return to my theme, which I resume in the name of Alfred Austin, author of "The Season" and other works. Amongst conversationalists Mr. Austin holds high rank, and readers of "The Season" will agree with me when I say that there are many lines in that satire worthy of the greatest writers of satirical verse. Being nothing of a politician myself, I find it difficult to understand the all-absorbing passion that possesses some men in the discussion and advocacy of political questions, and when—as I venture to think in the example of my friend—a remarkable intellect is allowed to spend itself in leading articles, however brilliant, or in essays, however closely argued, on questions of the hour, a serious loss to the higher forms of literature is the result. I still look to Alfred Austin for poetic work, either in prose or rhyme, that will realize all the promise foreshadowed by "The Season."

It would be difficult to discover a man more fitted in all respects for the editorial chair of *Punch* than

Mr. F. C. Burnand. Possessing the satiric power that overflows Mr. Austin's "Season," Mr. Burnand is also eminently distinguished as a humourist. I cannot boast of intimacy with the editor of *Punch*, but I have met him very often, and as often with delightfully amusing results. On one occasion I described to him a dinner-party at the Langham Hotel, given by that bright genius, "Ouida," at which—as, indeed, at several others—I had the honour of assisting. The dinner and the company were delightful. One charm of it, to me (being, I regret to say, an inveterate smoker), was the introduction of cigarettes during the course of the dinner, beginning, I think, after the fish. I had heard of the fashion in foreign countries, but it surprised me as occurring in England.

"Why were you surprised?" said Burnand. "You were dining with a Weeda."

Of all the men I have known, none dwells more pleasantly in my memory than Samuel Lover, painter, poet, playwright, and public entertainer. Many were the evenings at my house that were made to pass on rosy wing by the good stories, and still better playing and singing, of Lover. For some years the Miniature-Room at the Academy was enriched by the works of that universal genius. My first sight of Lover was in the year 1843, when he came to see my picture of "Falstaff and his Friends." Plays by him were being acted at two or three theatres, novels and songs were produced with extraordinary rapidity, and still time—and much of

it—was found for the production of excellent miniatures, one of those being shown to me on the occasion of his visit.

"How you can find time for all you do," said I, "I cannot imagine."

"Well, it is not generally known," said Lover, "but the truth is, the fairies help me."

In the year 1840, I was at work sketching from the rooms and pictures at Knole House. It was said that the housekeeper received small wages, if any, as the great number of visitors—then permitted to visit the house and its treasures—were supposed to contribute enough to make a satisfactory salary for that functionary. I well remember being disturbed in my work by a gentleman and two ladies. The gentleman was Count d'Orsay; one of the ladies was Lady Blessington, and the other her niece, I think, Miss Power. There are many ways of being known, one being "known by sight." This is the only knowledge I possess of Count d'Orsay; but I hope the following story, told me by Sir Edwin Landseer, will be accepted as an excuse for introducing the Count amongst "people I have known." D'Orsay was remarkably handsome, and as extravagant as he was good-looking. The result of the former advantage was a danger to the heart of every lady that approached him, and the consequence of the latter was imprisonment in Gore House on every day but Sunday. Arrest for debt was in full swing in D'Orsay's time. His "constitutional," therefore, was taken in the gardens

of the mansion on week-days, and anywhere abroad on Sundays. The Count was an accomplished man, notably as an artist; his practice being chiefly in portraits, amongst which were likenesses of the Queen and the great Duke of Wellington. The Queen was represented on horseback, and the picture was received with so much favour that an engraving was made from it. Before a copy of a picture in any style of engraving can be accepted by a publisher, it must receive revision and what is technically called "touching" by the producer of the picture from which it is made; and here arose a great difficulty. The engraver would not submit his work for scrutiny on a Sunday, and D'Orsay's delicate position prevented his seeing it on any other day.

"My dear Edwin," said he to Landseer, "what am I to do? the publisher will not pay me for the copyright till I have touched the proofs; and this miserable engraver refuses to receive me on a Sunday."

"There is nothing for it but a disguise," said Landseer. "Wrap yourself well up; come and breakfast with me some morning, and I will go with you to the engraver."

A time was fixed; and the Count, with much misgiving, and his face half hidden by a neckerchief, left the secure refuge of Gore House, and arrived in safety at Landseer's in St. John's Wood Road. The breakfast was very gay; each additional moment of security raised D'Orsay's spirits higher. The engraving was criticised, and the "touching" satis-

factorily effected. Gayer and gayer grew the Count.

"My dear Edwin," said he, "I want to see something; 'tis long—ah! how long!—since I have seen any public entertainment. Where can we go? What can we see?"

"I don't know," said Landseer, looking at his watch; "what can be seen at twelve o'clock in the day?" Then, after a pause, "There is nothing for it but Madame Tussaud's."

"Ah!" exclaimed the Count, "admirable! The waxworks—I have never seen them."

And to Baker Street went the two adventurers.

D'Orsay's delight was childlike, but brief. They had not been long in the rooms before D'Orsay touched Landseer's arm to draw his attention to two men who, at a little distance, were evidently watching the Count and his friend.

D'Orsay was very pale as he said:

"Let us go to the 'Chamber of Horrors.'"

The extra sixpences were paid; but, before the waxen murderers could be discussed, the two strangers seemed to have paid their sixpences also, and were close to the Count, when one of them, politely removing his hat, inquired if he had the honour of addressing Count d'Orsay.

"Yes," said he in a dignified tone, and drawing himself up to his full height, "I am Count d'Orsay."

"My lord," said the man, "Madame Tussaud, the old lady which your lordship saw as you came in——"

"Well, sir," said the Count in tremulous tones, "what of the lady?"

"She has sent me to ask if you would do her the honour to let her model you in wax?"

"In wax!" exclaimed the Count; "in marble, bronze, iron, my good fellow. Tell her, with my love, she may model me in anything!"

Yet another D'Orsay story, which I heard from Dr. Herring:

On the few halcyon days on which Count d'Orsay could move about without fear of arrest, he was generally accompanied by a huge dog of a somewhat fierce disposition. This animal was possessed of intelligence superior to most dogs.

"He knows quite well," said the Count, "the different classes of railway carriages, and always insists on travelling in the first. Oh yes, I always take a dog-ticket, as he knows quite well; but he objects to the 'coffin,'" as D'Orsay called the dog-compartment. "The other day," he continued, "I was sitting in my place waiting for the train to start, with Hector on the seat next to me, when the guard poked in his head and said:

"'That dog must not be there, sir. Have you got a ticket for him?'

"'Yes; here it is.'

"'But there is a place in the van for dogs, and he must go to it.'

"'Take him, then,' said I.

"The man with great courage attempted to seize my Hector, who, with a snarl that appalled that

brave guard, snapped at his hand, and would have eaten it in another moment if the train had not started on the instant. And Hector rode once more first-class at *cofeen praice.*"

This story fails somewhat for the want of the delightful broken-English in which Herring used to tell it.

Actors must now appear amongst the "people I have known." And first and foremost in all respects is Miss Ellen Terry, whose kind patience in sitting for the picture of "The Private View" I shall ever gratefully remember. The merits of this lady are so patent to the world as to need no eulogy from me.

Delightful as was Miss Terry's Juliet, the Nurse of Mrs. Stirling was no less perfect. I am old enough to remember the first performances of "Masks and Faces," when Mrs. Stirling, as Peg Woffington, was in the prime of her beauty and at the height of powers that have never decayed, as those who saw her last performances can bear witness. This excellent actress threatens to leave the stage. If she should refuse to listen to those who hear of this resolve with great regret, she will all too soon become a memory, and make a vacancy that cannot be filled.

Age has few charms, but amongst them may be reckoned the pleasures of memory; and who that has seen Mrs. Keeley (who is still, happily, with us) in the Smike of "Nicholas Nickleby," or the house-breaker in "Jack Sheppard," to say nothing of

other and numberless characters, can ever forget the perfect truth to nature displayed in every part she acted.

What Mrs. Keeley's age may be I shall not be so rude as to inquire; that "age cannot wither her" was evident to me when I saw her the other day, looking exactly as she did thirty years ago.

Others I knew but "by sight" only, namely, Mrs. Warner, Mrs. Orger, Mrs. Kean, Mrs. Honey —and what inimitable actresses were they!

With Mrs. Bancroft I have the honour of a slight personal acquaintance. Off the stage she is delightful; on it, absolute perfection.

As a rule, I venture to say that amateur acting is like amateur painting—simply intolerable. There are brilliant exceptions; notably in the instances of Dickens and Lady Monckton, who, great as she is now — witness her unsurpassable performance in "Jim the Penman"—was but an amateur the other day, when she must forgive me for saying that I could see but little sign of the bud which has since blossomed so abundantly.

I see that my old friend Miss Braddon has just finished her fiftieth, or, as her publishers call it, her "Jubilee" novel. Amongst all the "people I have known," I think of no one with greater pleasure than Miss Braddon; because I have derived infinite amusement from her works, and as much satisfaction from her personal acquaintance as I have from that of any other authoress. I had the honour of painting her portrait for her husband and publisher, Mr. Maxwell.

I don't know whether she still follows the practice of making drawings of the intended scenes in her novels before she brings them so vividly before us with her pen; but I well remember her showing me several pen-and-ink sketches of scenes in "Lady Audley's Secret"—notably a drawing of the man who is thrown down the well: his boots only and small portions of his legs being visible. The prodigious industry of this author, and the infinite variety of her plots and incidents, astonish such ignorant people as the present writer.

Miss Braddon—or, to give her her proper name, Mrs. Maxwell—has kindly made suggestions for subjects for pictures to me on many occasions; and I often regret that I did not adopt one of them.

Mrs. S. C. Hall, whose Irish stories were—and perhaps are still—very popular, comes well amongst authoresses known to me; and many is the pleasant evening that I spent at the pretty little cottage in Brompton called The Rosery. It was there, on a very hot night in the height of the London season, that I saw—for the only time in my life—a lion thoroughly lionized. The lion was Tom Moore, the poet; and the lionizers, consisting chiefly of ladies, clustered round the little man and nearly smothered him. Moore was so diminutive that I could scarcely see his small gasping mouth, which, in its efforts to inhale the dreadful atmosphere, reminded me of a fish out of water. No wonder that he lost one of his shoes; and it was "a sight" to see him sitting, like one of Cinderella's sisters, whilst a very pretty

admirer insisted on replacing the shoe on his little foot.

I have known lions since Moore's days whose roars I prefer to those of the poet; and prominent amongst them was Charles Dickens, whose dislike of being made an object of special mark in any company was so well known, that it would have required lionizers to have been as bold as lions, if they had ventured to risk the reception which the younger author would have assuredly given them if they had treated him *à la* Moore.

I have already spoken of Mademoiselle de la Ramé, otherwise "Ouida;" but I have not noticed an accomplishment which may not be generally known to be possessed by that lady. "Ouida" is an excellent artist, as many of her drawings, hanging on the walls of her rooms in the Langham Hotel, sufficiently proved to me. They were indeed remarkable specimens of amateur work.

I was curious to know the origin of the famous name under which this lady writes, and it is interesting, I think, to find that it arises from a child's attempt to say "Louisa," just as the immortal "Boz" was adopted from another infantine attempt to say "Moses." My information with respect to "Ouida" came from "Ouida" herself, of whom I saw a good deal some years ago, before she left the fogs of England for the sunshine of Italy.

One of the most original and attractive writers of the present day — whom I have the pleasure and the right to name amongst those I know—is

Miss Rhoda Broughton. I have read all her novels, and I have passed some days in her society in a country-house and in my own, and I can assure those who know the lady's works, but not the author of them, that this writer is just as delightful without the pen as she is with it—brilliant and incisive in conversation; never dull or the cause of dulness in others; in short, a perfect instance of the truth of my theory that the real nature of the woman or the man appears in her or his work.

Of Mrs. Henry Wood I knew so little (she dined but once, I think, at my house), and that little would be as nothing in support of my pet idea, that I must content myself with an expression of gratitude for the pleasure I have received from—I am sorry to say—the few books I have read of hers. With "East Lynne" I was enthralled from the beginning to the end. From what Mrs. Wood told me of the great sale of her books, it is evident that she is one of the most popular of our modern novelists.

"All the world's a stage," and to some actors the stage is all the world. I confess that in some few instances the admiration that an actor has excited in me by his performance on the stage, has been succeeded by disappointment when I have met him in private life. It seems as if all the beautiful language, and all that the language means, has fallen from his lips without having penetrated his brain, for his conversation is prosy and commonplace. He is, in fact, "dull company." Amongst those I have known these are rare exceptions. On

the other hand, there are actors, and actresses too, who are as entertaining off the stage as they are on it. My old friend Toole is one; for funny as he is when in sock and buskin, he is funnier still at a dinner-table. What stories of his could I repeat, if I could tell them as well as he does! Alas! they are public property, and I must not touch them. I hope I shall not offend my friend when I announce that he is a practical joker; but his jokes are harmless—unlike some others that I have named—and always amusing. It is told of him that he was seen, at the close of a railway journey, to be going through a performance with one of his gloves, which, on a close observation, appeared to be the stuffing it with cotton-wool till it assumed the shape of a human hand. He then contrived to arrange it in the front of his coat, so that it should appear to be one of his own, and he placed his railway-ticket between the fingers. The train stopped presently, and the usual cry, "All tickets ready!" was heard.

"Tickets, please!" said a guard, opening the door of the carriage.

"Take mine," said Toole.

The guard took the ticket, and the hand as well.

"The guard was a robust person," Toole is reported to have said, "but he staggered back in a faint, calling feebly for smelling-salts."

One more example. That inveterate joker, Sothern, had made an appointment with Toole to dine at a well-known restaurant; the hour of meeting was fixed, and Sothern arrived somewhat before

the appointed time. An old gentleman was dining at a table at some little distance from that prepared for the two actors. He was reading the paper, which he had comfortably arranged before him, as he was eating his dinner. Sothern walked up to him, and, striking him a smart blow between the shoulders, said:

"Hullo, old fellow! who would have thought of your dining here? I thought you never——"

The assaulted diner turned angrily round, when Sothern exclaimed:

"I beg you a thousand pardons, sir! I thought you were an old friend of mine—a family man—whom I never expected to see here. I hope you will pardon me."

The old gentleman growled a reply, and Sothern returned to his table, where he was presently joined by Toole, to whom he said:

"See that old boy? I'll bet you half-a-crown you daren't go and give him a slap on the back, and pretend you have mistaken him for a friend."

"Done!" said Toole, and done it was immediately, with a result that must be imagined, for it was indescribable.

Forgive me, dear Toole, and don't deny these things; for if they are not true, they ought to be.

I now come to one who is as much liked as a man as he is admired as an actor—Henry Irving. Well do I remember seeing my friend in a play called "Hunted Down," and saying to my wife, who was with me, "That is the real thing. That man is

a genius." And I was right. If I were to relate a tithe of the kind actions of Irving to his brother-actors, to friends, and to strangers, I should show him to be as good a man off the stage as he is a great one upon it; but I spare his blushes and the patience of my readers.

Common gratitude forces me to add one more name to the list of those from whom I have received so much pleasure. William Farren, worthy heir of a great name, is one of those who have so often delighted me by his admirable rendering of "high comedy," that I cannot resist telling him here what I have felt compelled to tell him privately. The best "Sir Peter Teazle" and the best "Lord Ogleby" is, of course, pre-eminent in minor characters.

And with this honoured name I close the list of "people I have known," not without a fear that my readers will endorse the following verse, sent to me by Shirley Brooks, the editor of *Punch*, in return for a good joke that I sent to him for insertion in that periodical:

"There is a young artist called Frith,
His pictures have vigour and pith;
But his writings have not—
They're the kussedest rot
He could trouble an editor with."

I cannot surmount the reluctance I feel to dwell longer on my own doings. Good or bad, those of the last years are familiar to all who have done me the honour to seek out my work in the Annual Exhibitions.

A new style of art has arisen, which seems to gratify a public ever craving for novelty. Very likely I am posing as the old-fashioned Academician, who declines to acknowledge that eccentricity is a proof of genius, or audacity an evidence of power; and I may be justly, or unjustly, accused of unfairness when I declare that the *bizarre*, French, "impressionist" style of painting recently imported into this country will do incalculable damage to the modern school of English art. But I claim the right of judgment that half a century's constant practice of my art must give, and I wish the last words of these reminiscences to be those of warning to the rising generation of painters.

Be impressionist by all means, but let your impressions be as complete and as true to nature as those received by the great old masters. Let it not be possible for anyone to say of your impressions, as was well said of some impressionist work now popular, "If nature made that impression upon the man, how much wiser he would have been if he had kept it to himself." Keep in view the honoured names of the great painters of old, study their works, and, convincing yourselves that they were produced by simple, earnest, loving study of nature, endeavour to "go and do likewise."

THE END.

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ERRATA.

Vol. I., page 339, line 20, *for* "'68," *read* "'63."
,, page 387, line 31, *for* "Stafford," *read* "Stratford."
Vol. II., page 124, line 21, *for* "1887," *read* "1877."
,, page 195, line 4, *for* "Halls," *read* "Hals."
,, page 324, line 16, *for* "Norman," *read* "Normand."

NOTE.

Vol. I., page 188.

A propos of Sir Joshua Reynolds's painting on Sundays, the following extract may be quoted from Hannah More's "Diary":

"Hampton, December, 1784.

"Poor dear Johnson! he is past all hope. The dropsy has brought him to the point of death; his legs are scarified, but nothing will do. I have, however, the comfort to hear that his dread of dying is in a great measure subdued; and now he says 'the bitterness of death is past.' He sent the other day for Sir Joshua; and, after much serious conversation, told him he had three favours to beg of him, and he hoped he would not refuse a dying friend, be they what they would. Sir Joshua promised. The first was that he would never paint on a Sunday; the second that he would forgive him thirty pounds that he had lent him, as he wanted to leave them to a distressed family; the third was that he would read the Bible whenever he had an opportunity, and that he would never omit it on a Sunday. There was no difficulty but upon the *first* point; but at length Sir Joshua promised to gratify him in all."

"Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Mrs. Hannah More," 2nd edition, vol. i., p. 376.

[*At end of Vol. II.*

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